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SERIES 1

JUERGEN TELLER

A curated series of photography by
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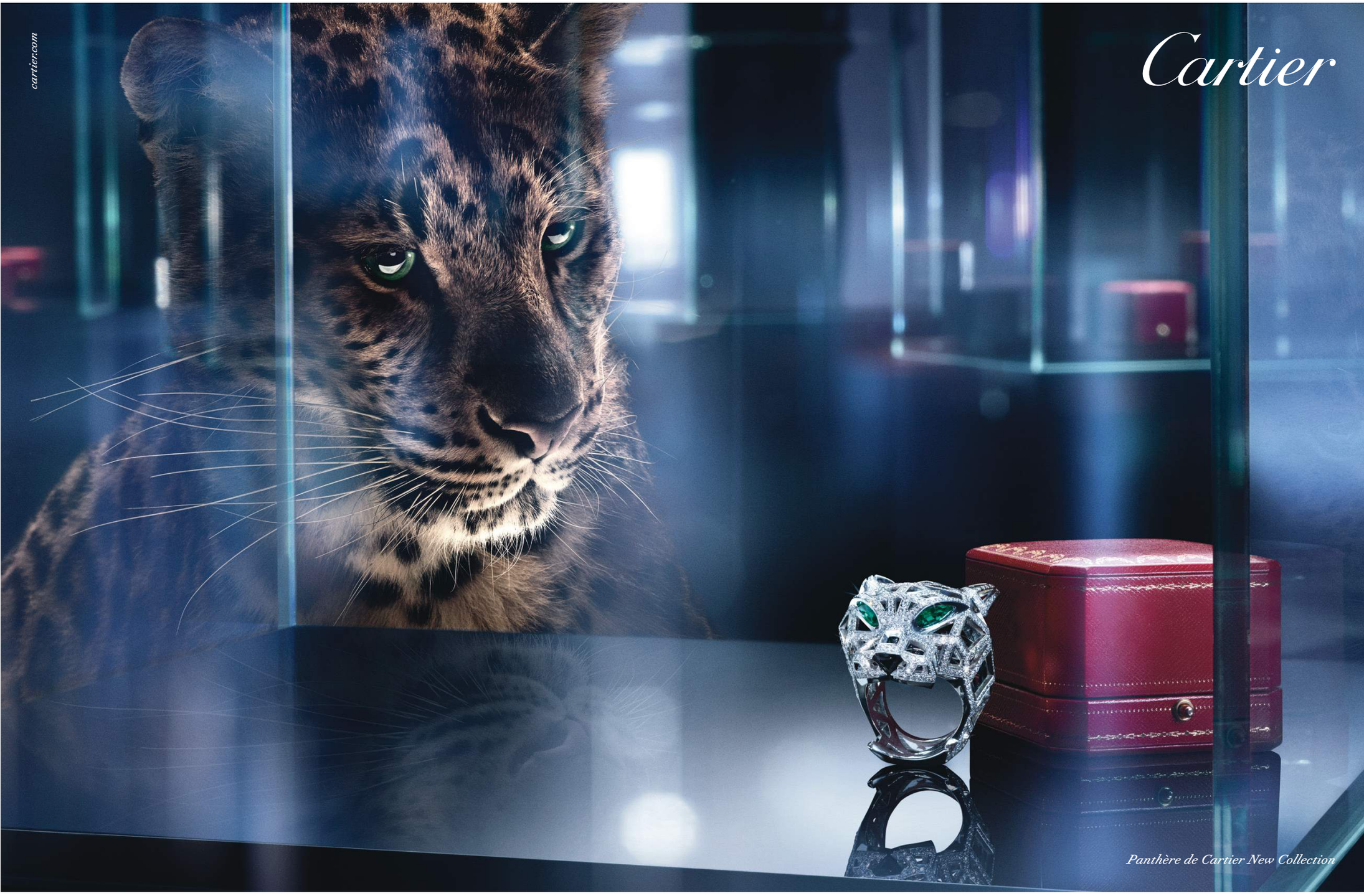
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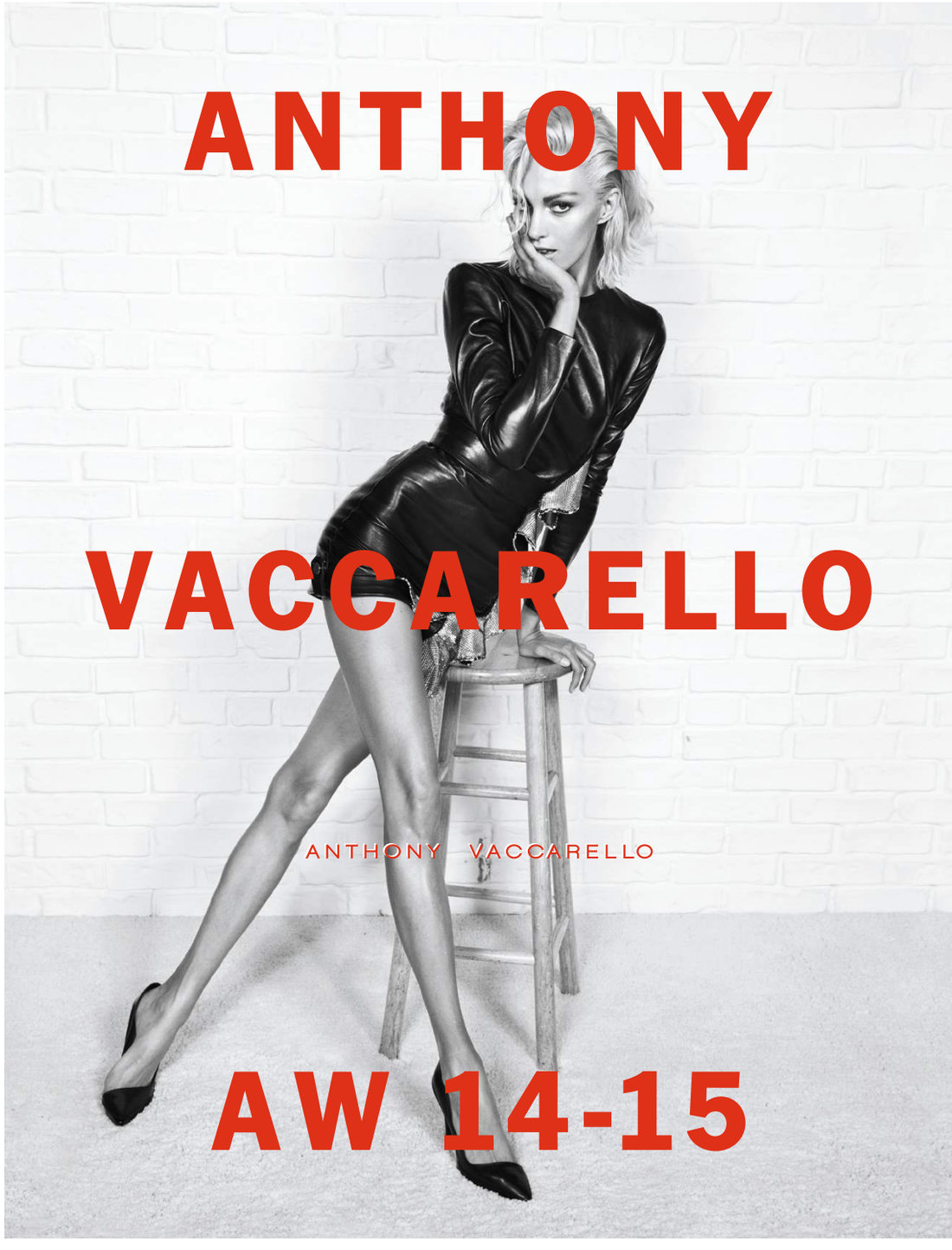

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Imran Amed was born and raised in Calgary, Canada to parents of Indian origin. He has been living in London for almost 15 years and is happy to now call it home. Imran would want his personal fragrance to have an intense, exotic and soothing scent.

Vanessa Bruno was born in France. Her mother is Danish and her father is Italian. Vanessa would like her personal fragrance to be fresh, feminine and natural – something created from the flowers and scents of the countryside.

Nicola Formichetti was born in Tokyo, but raised in Rome. Nicola would like his personal fragrance to smell like a mix of Tokyo and London, of East meets West.

Jo-Ann Furniss grew up in Manchester. She is a consultant, writer and editor.

Hung Huang comes from Beijing, the city of smog. Hung would like her personal fragrance to smell like freshly boiled Chinese dumplings straight out of the pot.

Nikolas Koenig is from Frankfurt, Germany. His fragrance would smell like a garden in Piedmont on a summer day with a hint of sandalwood.

Alasdair McLellan is from Doncaster, England. Alasdair would like his personal fragrance to smell like a hot mug of Yorkshire Tea.

Mario Palmieri is from Planet Earth. He often wonders what it is that he really does. Mario would like his personal fragrance to smell of his mother's breasts.

Robert Polidori is from Montréal, Canada. After 30 years in New York and 15 years in Paris, he now lives in Santa Monica, California. Robert would like to create a personal fragrance that gives one the instant power of moving through space in absolute obscurity.

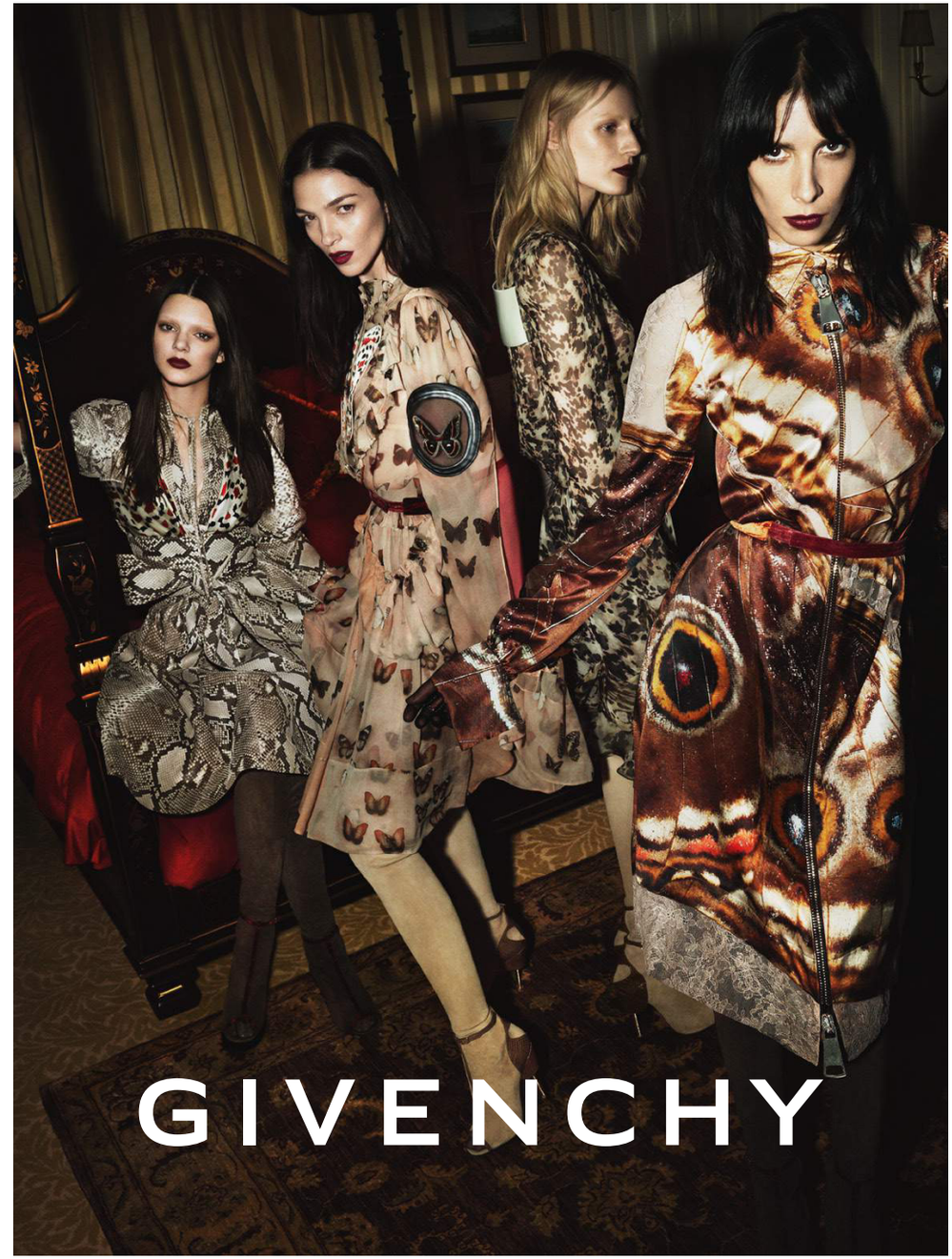
Loïc Prigent was born in a small village on La Manche in Brittany, France. He is a director and documentary film maker.

Olivier Rizzo & Willy Vanderperre are both from Belgium. They would like their personal fragrance to smell of a combination of their two scents, as if they had ultimately become one.

Jerry Stafford is from Bromley in Kent, England but lives in Paris. Jerry would like the top notes of his fragrance to smell of the Queen of the Night flower, *Epiphyllum Oxypetalum*: the flowers of this night-blooming Cereus open only one night a year after sunset. The middle note of his fragrance would smell of white truffle: *trifola d'Alba*, *Tuber magnatum*. Its base note would smell of green-leaf volatiles, like freshly mown grass, which is in fact the smell of volatile organic compounds acting as the plant's chemical defense when under attack.

Juergen Teller is from Bubenreuth, Germany. Juergen wouldn't create his own personal fragrance.

Matt Tyrnauer is from Los Angeles. Matt would like his personal fragrance to be odourless.



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FREJA BY TERRY RICHARDSON
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DELUXE

How can a magazine stimulate the senses and leave its trace on the world in a way that neither Apple nor Google have yet to?

One word: smell.

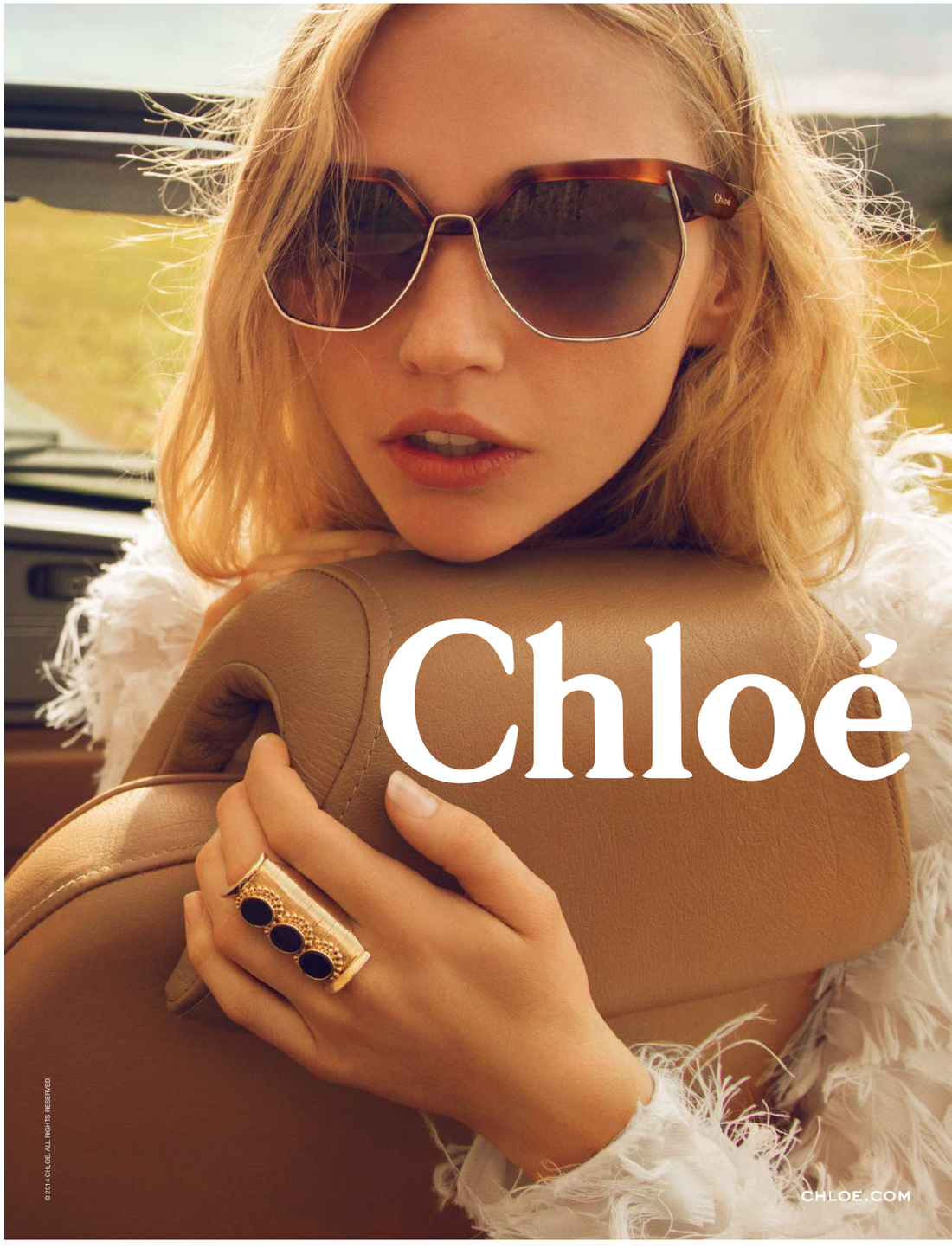
Dizzy from the news that even deceased revolutionaries now front eponymous fragrances – the recently launched men's cologne *Ernesto* (as in 'Che' Guevara) bursts with citrus and woody notes, while *Hugo* (Chávez) is a more playful mango and papaya-based affair – we thought it the ideal time to scratch (and sniff) the surface of perfumery.

For a global industry that's turned over 34 billion euros in the past 12 months, it's safe to say that every last beauty shot, bottle design, olfactory formula and model contract plays its part in stirring society's hopes, fears and senses.

Once again, we started by calling Juergen Teller – if anyone could redefine beauty photography, it was him (although in fairness to our cover stars Lara, Liya, Stella and Saskia, we didn't so much throw Juergen into beauty as throw beauty into Juergen). His extraordinary pictures then led us to Prada's 'nose', Daniela Andrier, who created the exquisite fragrances impregnating *System*'s four covers, your hands, your desks, coffee tables and news stands the world over (beat that, Google).

From fragrance comes beauty, and from beauty comes much of this issue: Cindy Sherman and Peter Philips discussing transformation; the difference between Prada and Miu Miu as seen by – who else? – Prada and Miu Miu; Rick Owens questioning his virility; and Serge Lutens recalling how his tenure at Dior sparked a beauty revolution.

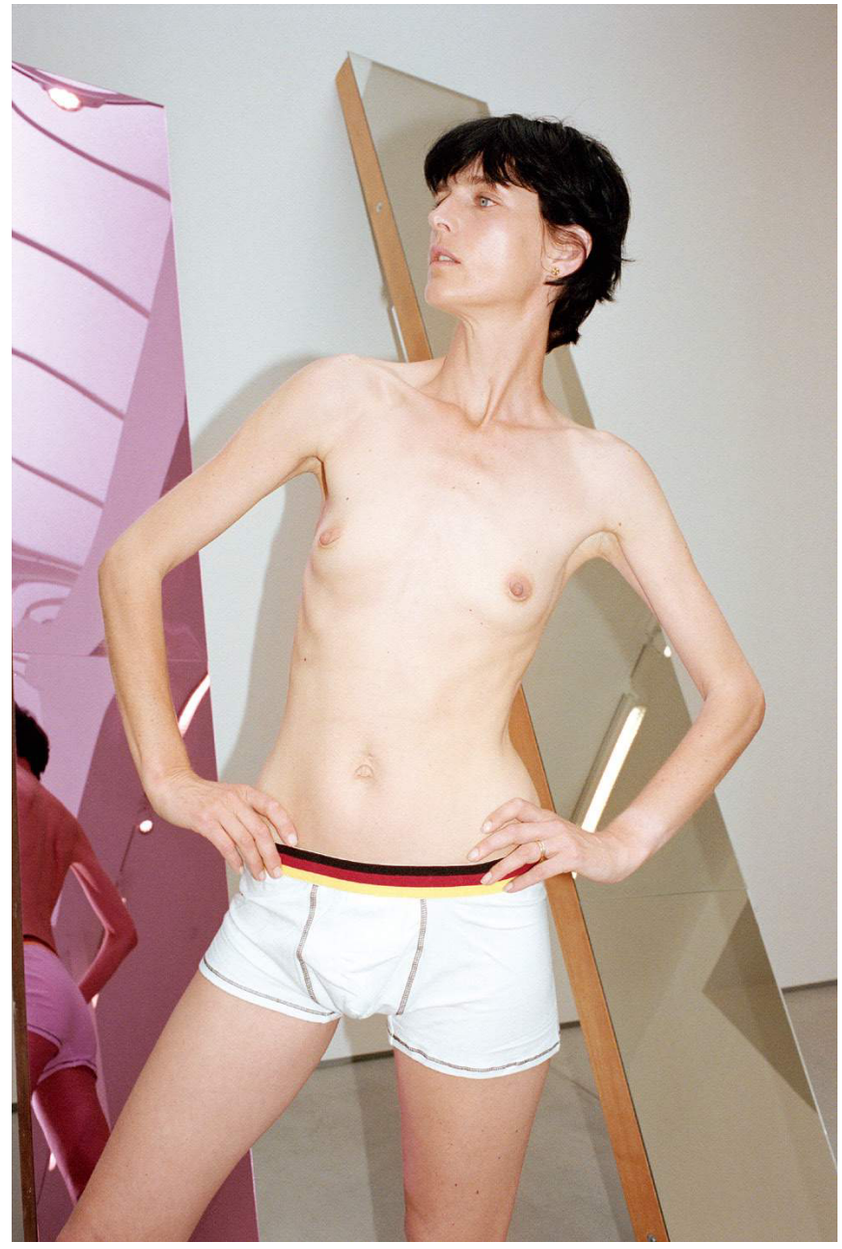
Ernesto and Hugo would have been proud.



Vetiver, almond and cedar.

Smells like Stella Tennant.

Photographs by Juergen Teller
Perfume blended by Daniela Andrier



‘They used to say I was really modern looking – whatever that is.’

Stella Tennant

Model: Stella Tennant c/o Viva Models. Make-up: Niamh Quinn c/o Iga. Artwork: Jim Lambie. Photo Assistance: Karin Xiao. Retouching: Quickfix Retouch. Scanning: John Hempstead. Special thanks to Sadie Coles HQ.

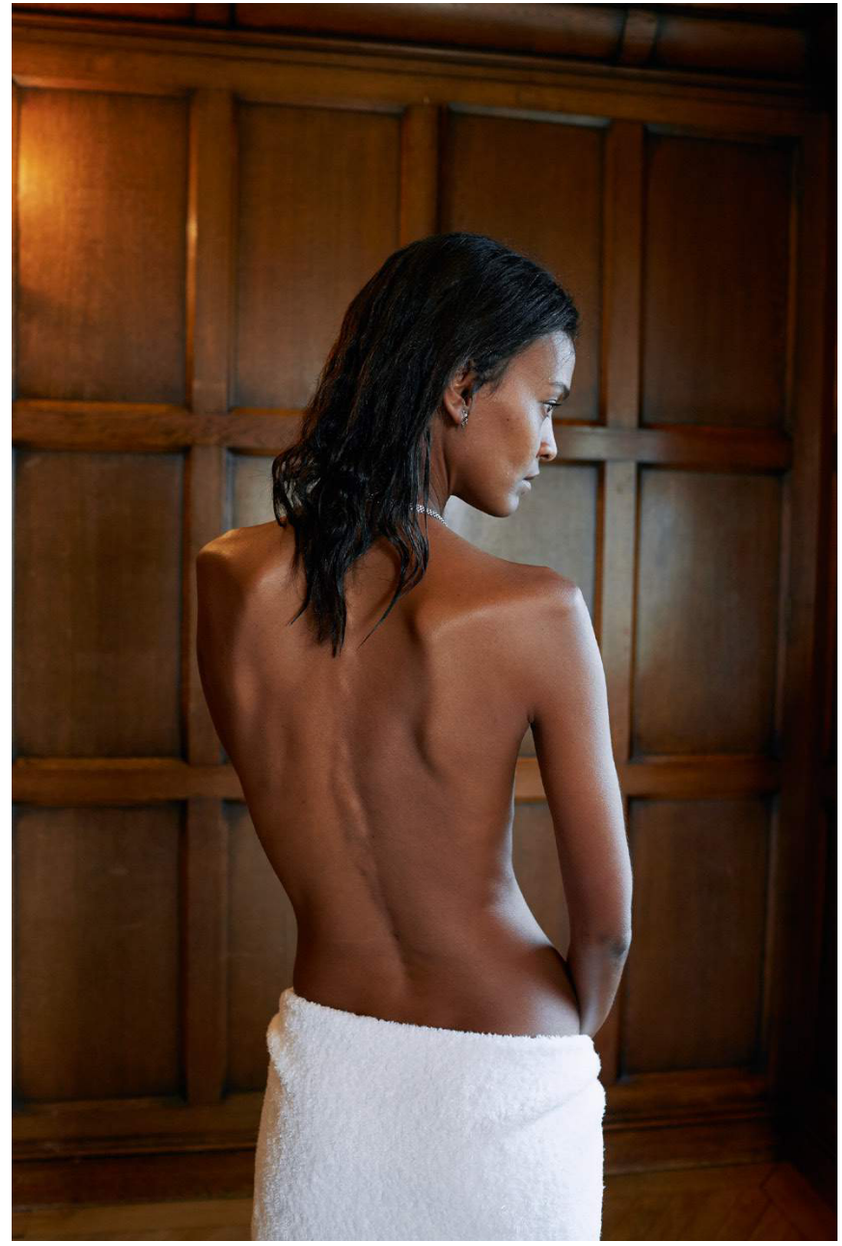
Rose, iris and orange blossom.

Smells like Liya Kebede.

Photographs by Juergen Teller
Perfume blended by Daniela Andrier

‘You look at the image and reflect on whether you’ve achieved what you wanted or given enough of yourself. I’m usually always so critical of my own work.’

Liya Kebede



‘I’m not really sure I pay attention to what people say about me. When I look in the mirror, I just see myself.’

Liya Kebede

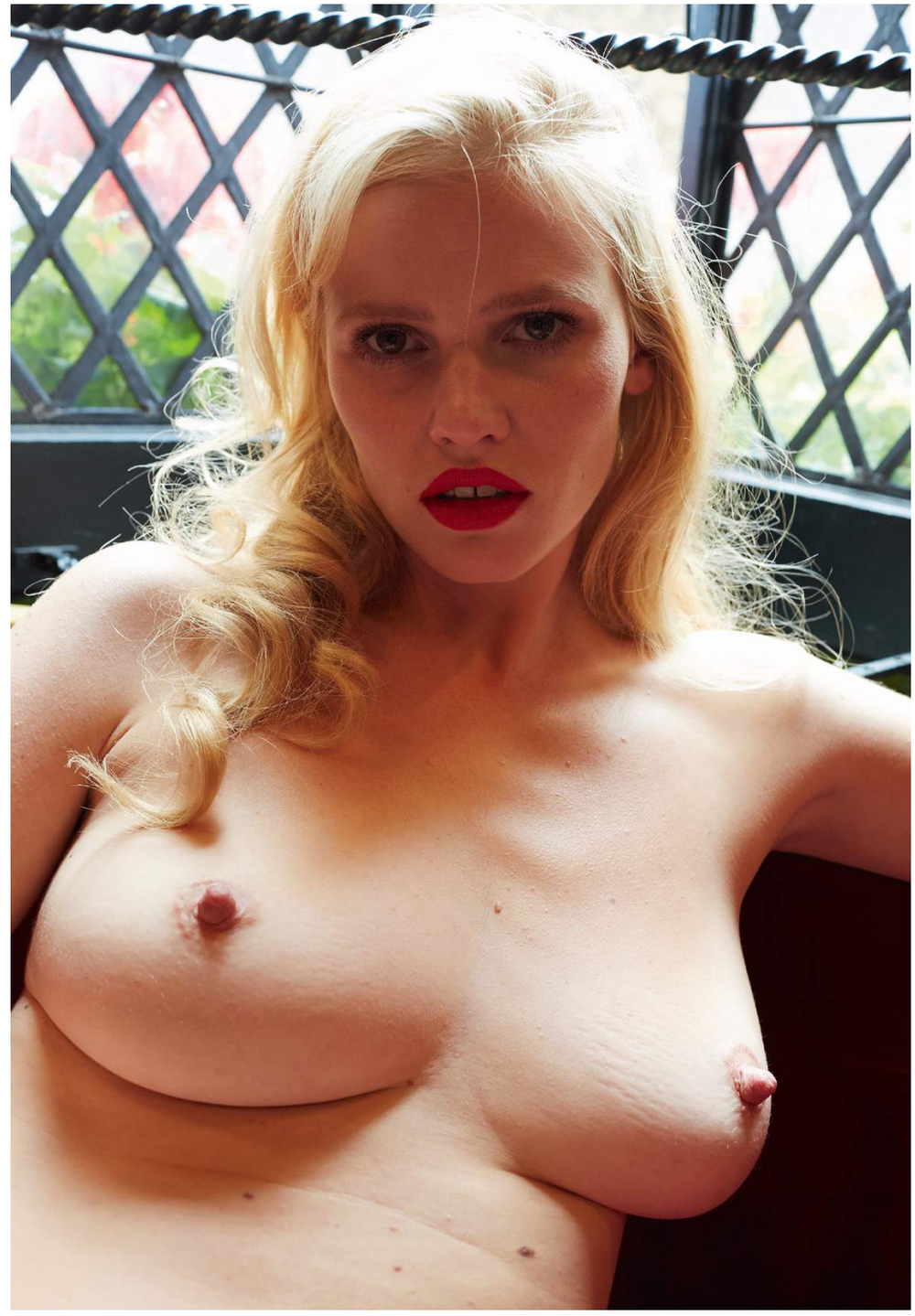
Model: Liya Kebede c/o IMG Models. Photo Assistance: Karin Xiao. Production: JN Production. Retouching: Quickfix Retouch. Special thanks to Hôtel Raphael.

Raspberry, heliotrope and iris.

Smells like Lara Stone.

Photographs by Juergen Teller
Perfume blended by Daniela Andrier

Ritz
CAMPARI

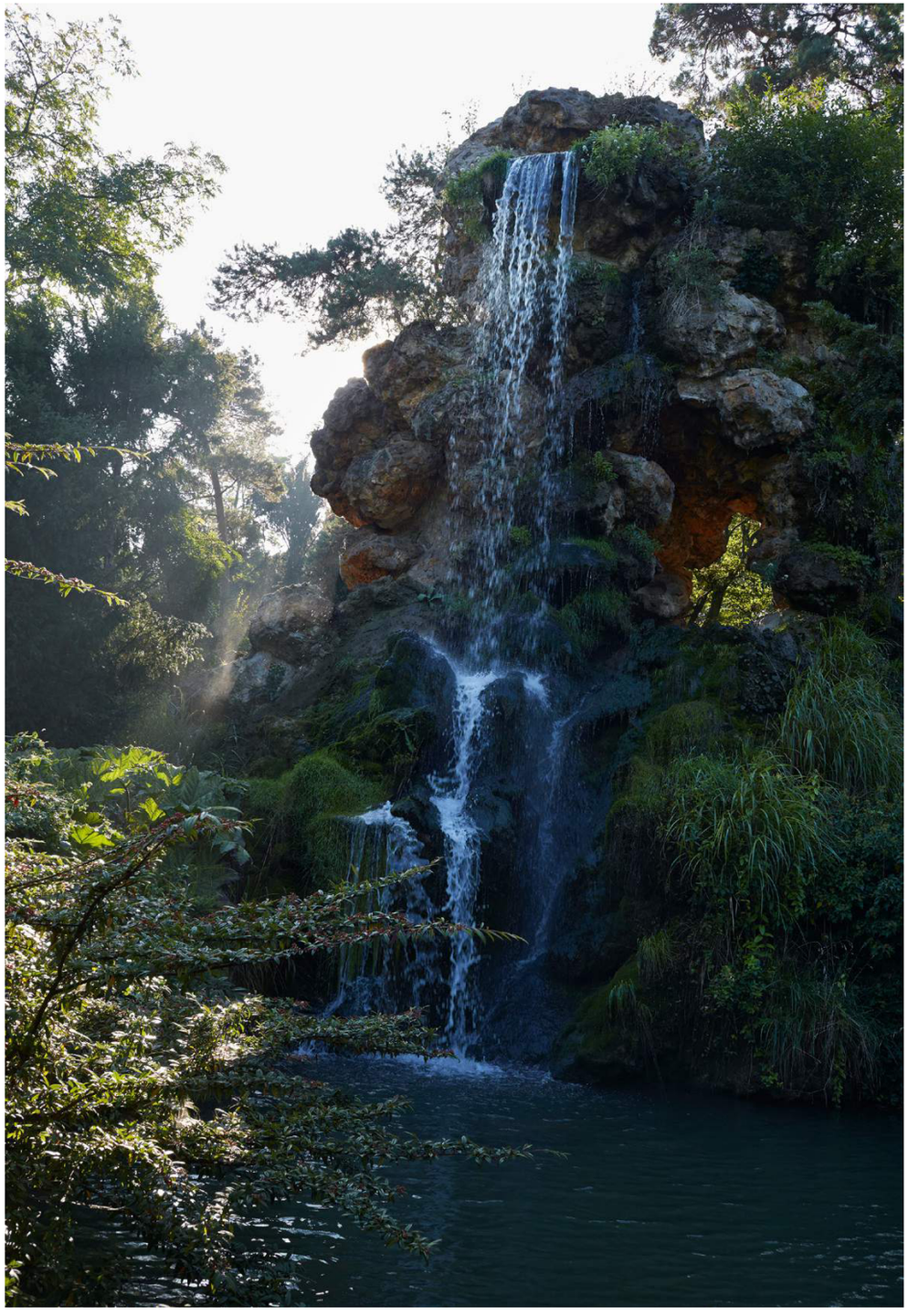


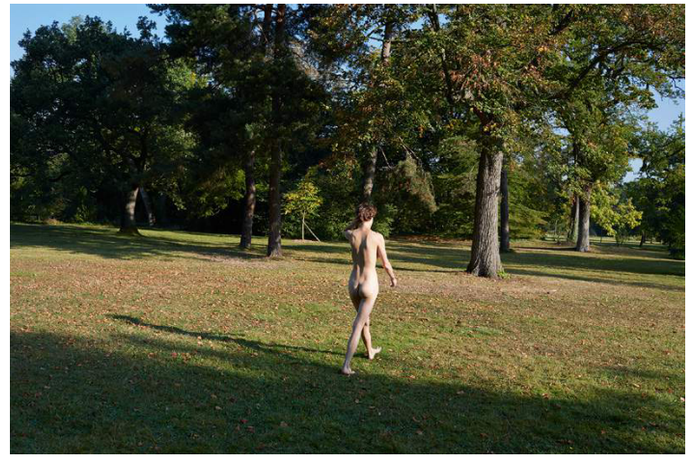
Model: Lara Stone c/o IMG Models. Hair: Syd Hayes c/o Premier Hair and Make-up using L'Oréal Paris. Make-up: Lynsey Alexander c/o Streeters London using L'Oréal Paris. Photo Assistance: Karin Xiao. Production: Laura Holmes Production. Retouching: Quick fix Retouch. Special thanks to Rules Restaurant.

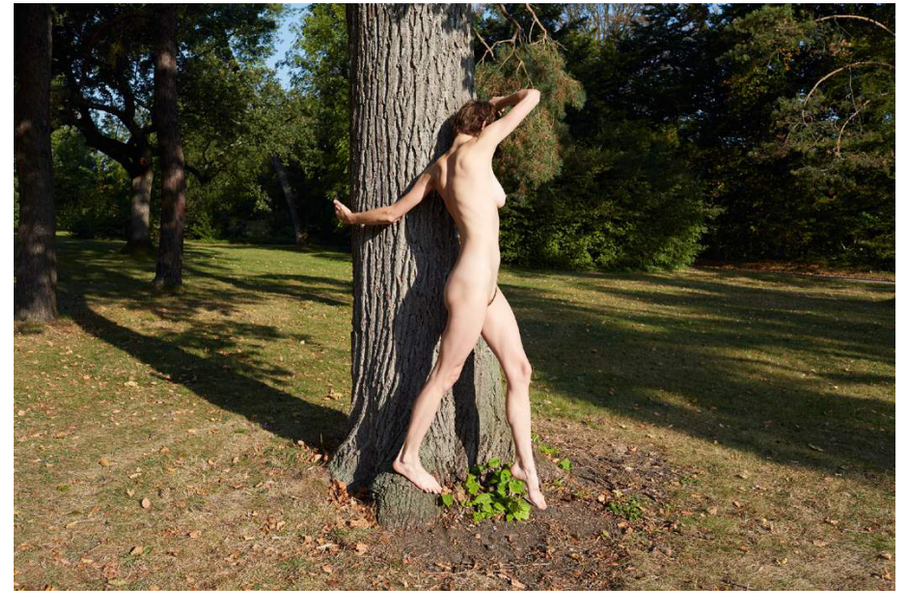
Neroli, citron and amber.

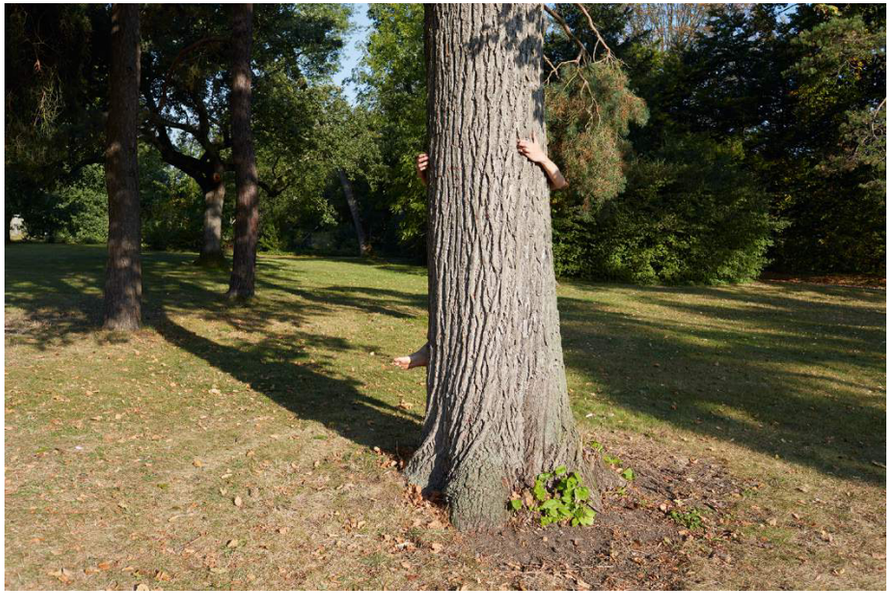
Smells like Saskia de Brauw.

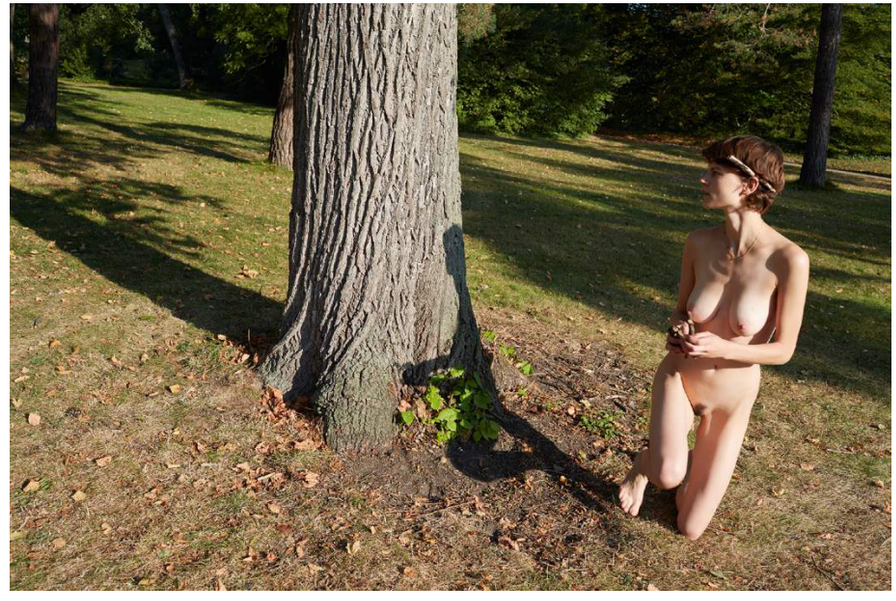
Photographs by Juergen Teller
Sittings editor: Jerry Stafford
Perfume blended by Daniela Andrier

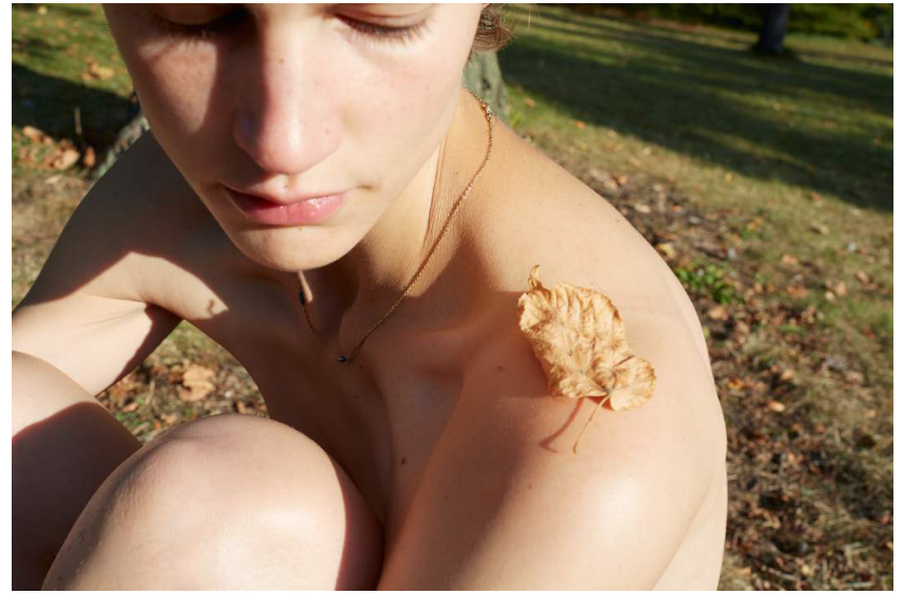


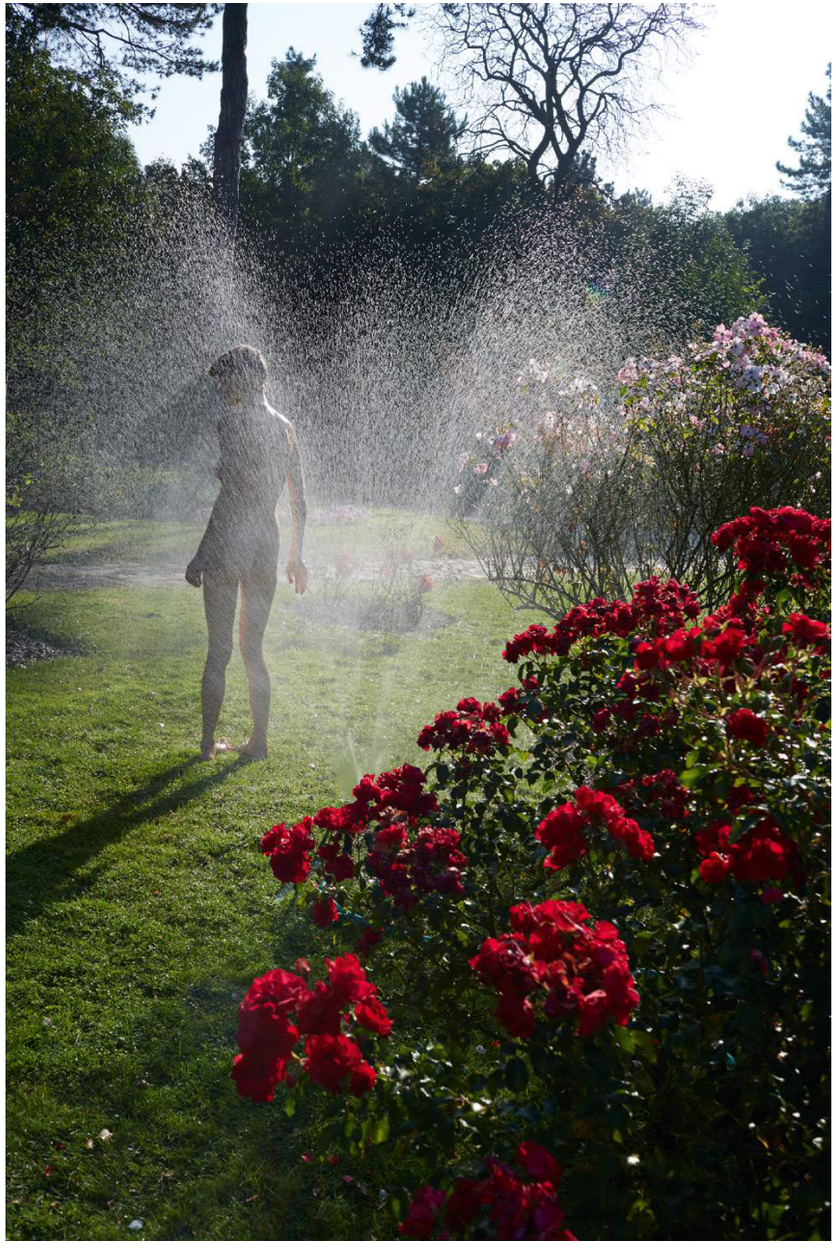


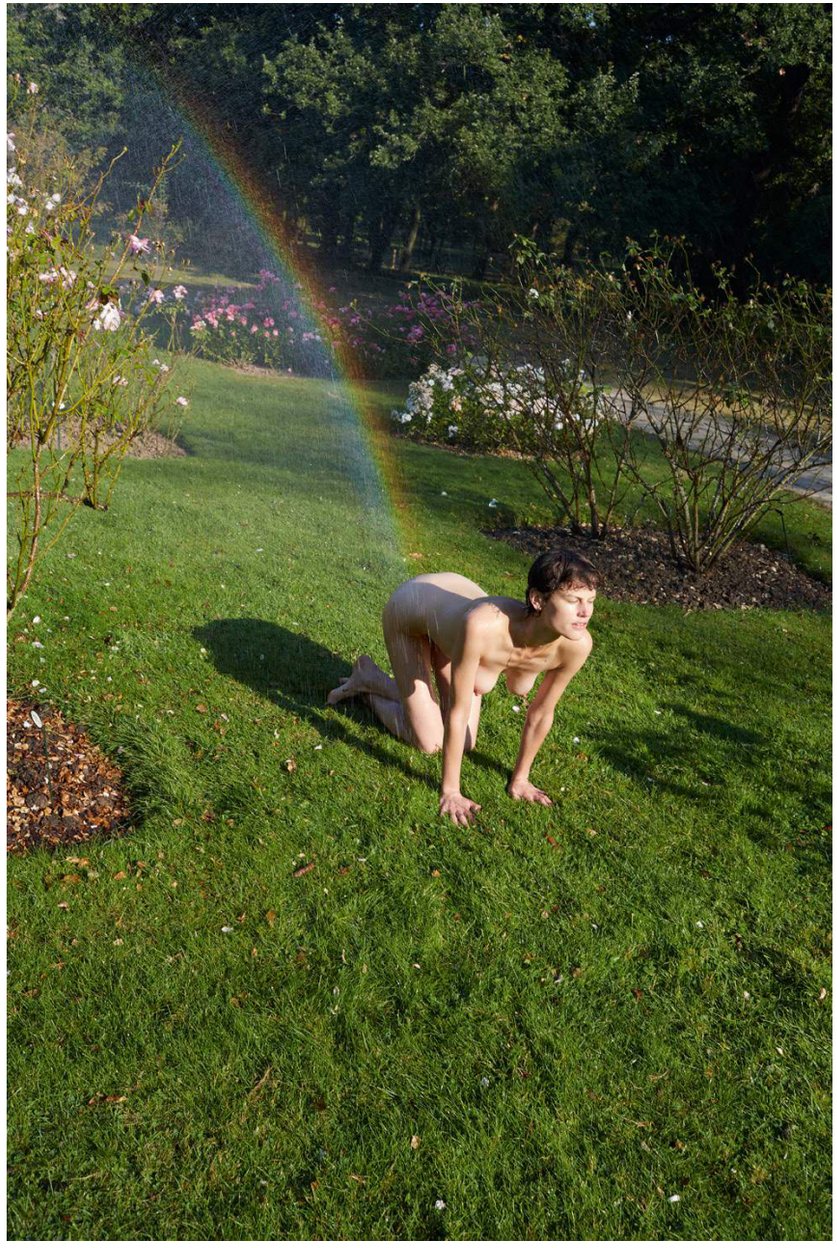


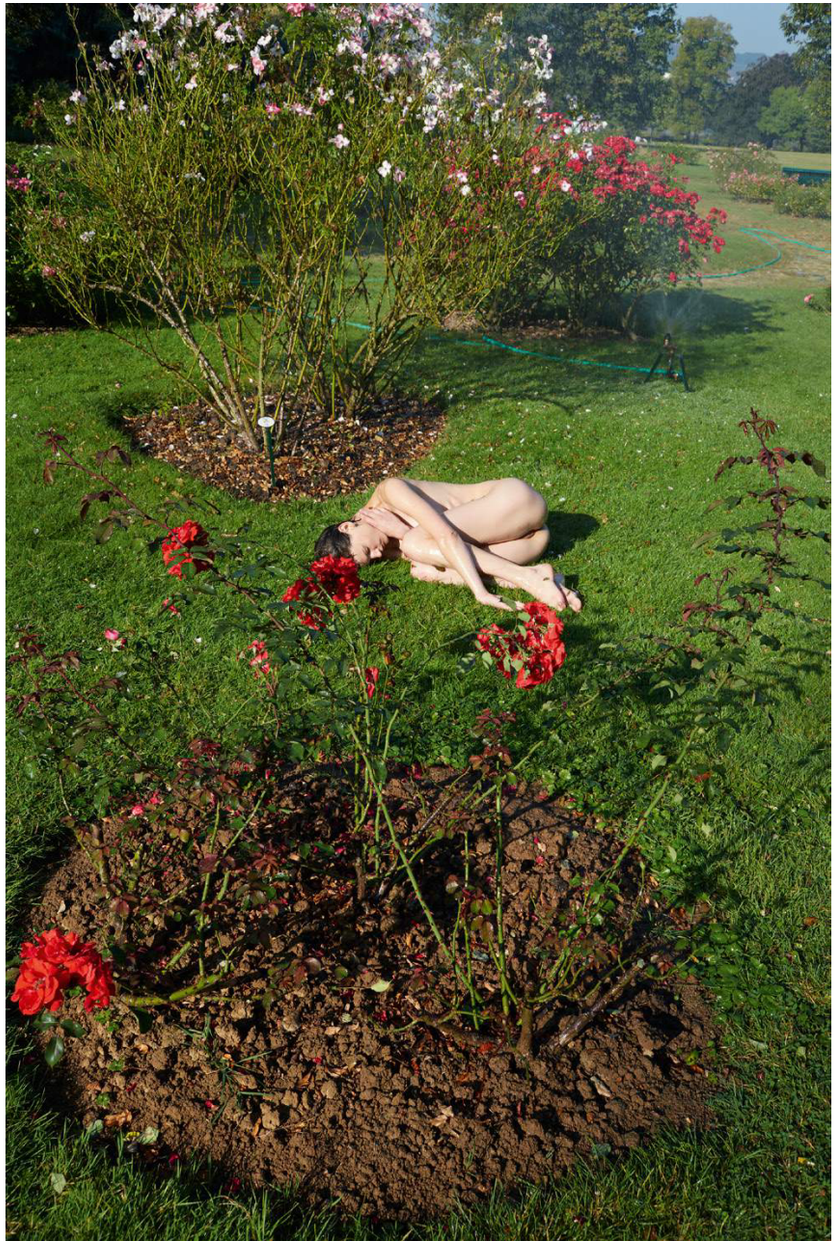


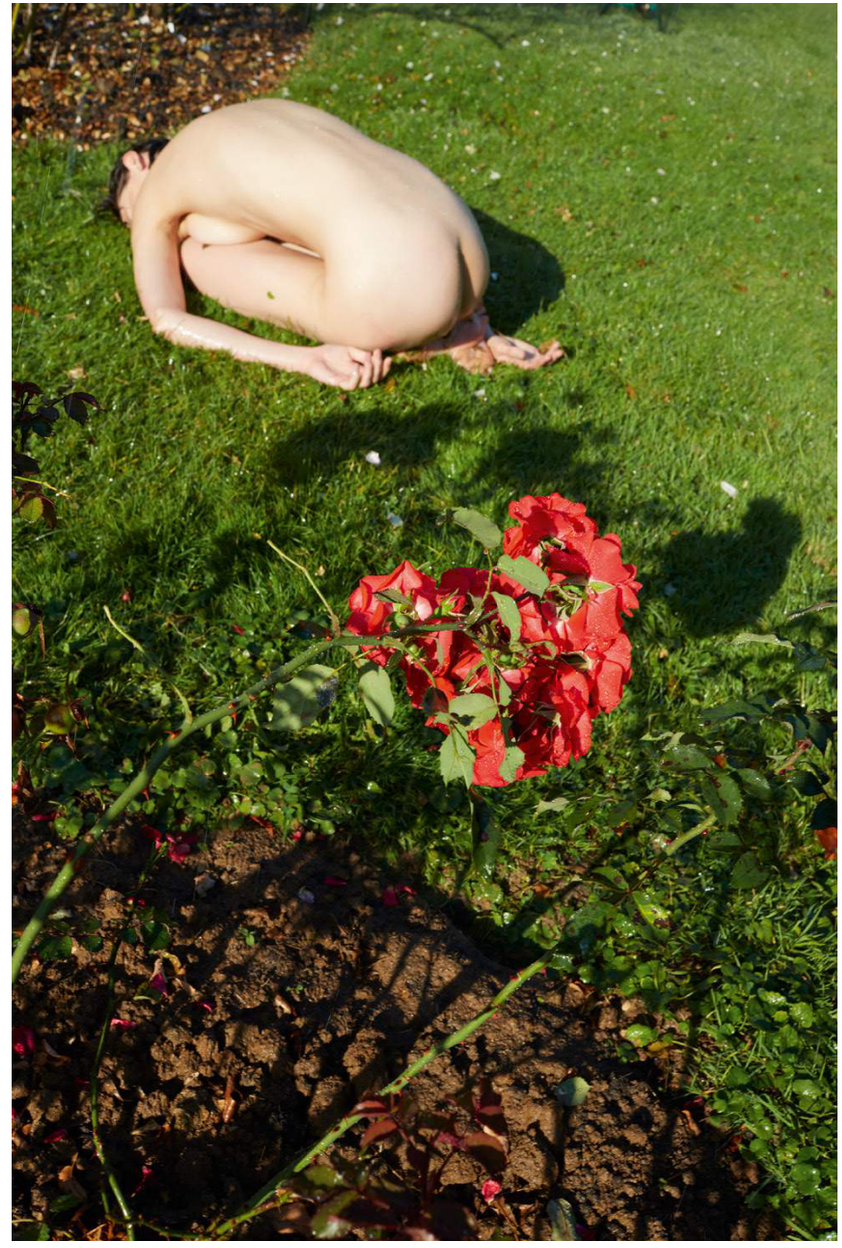


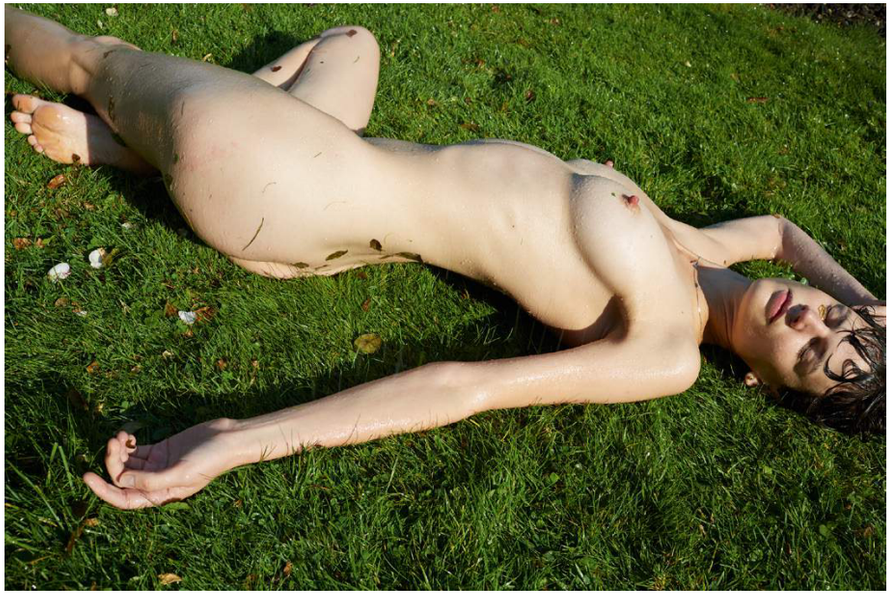


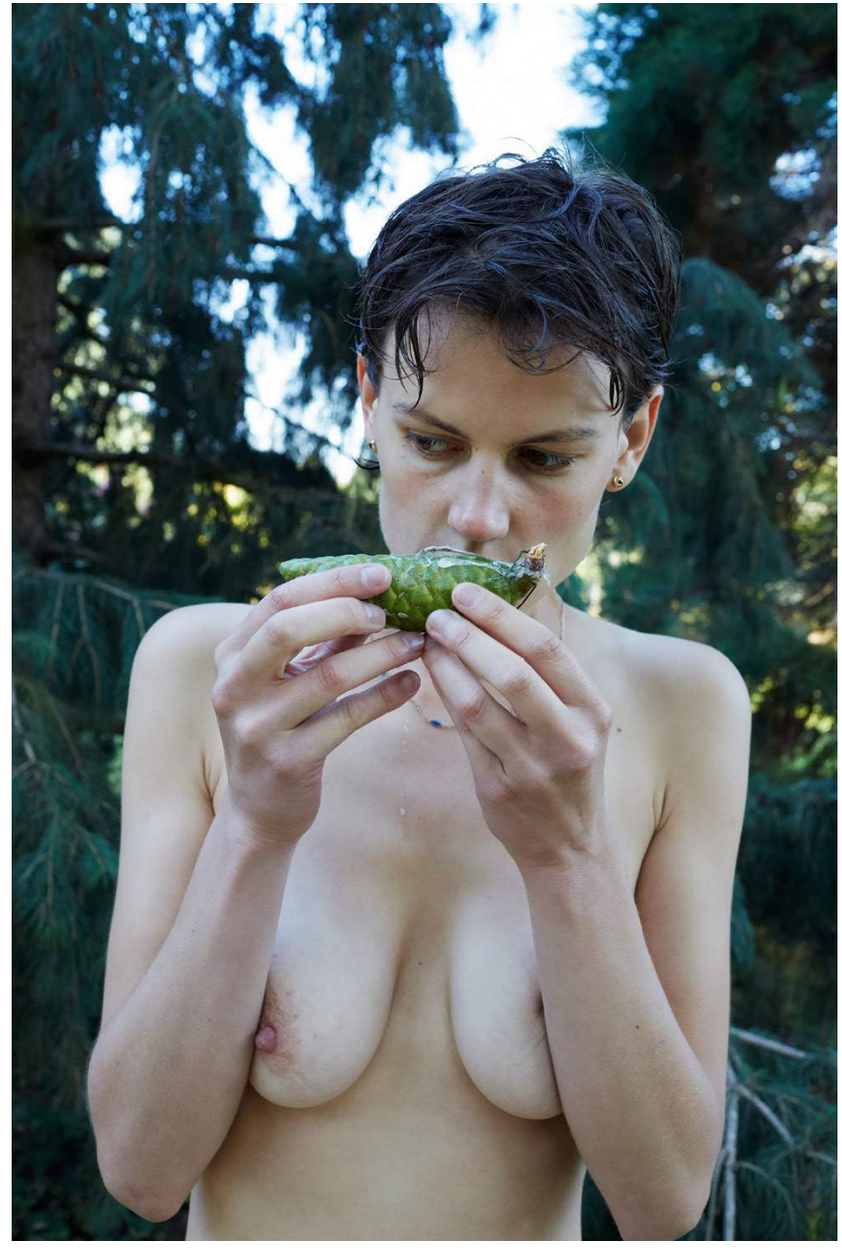


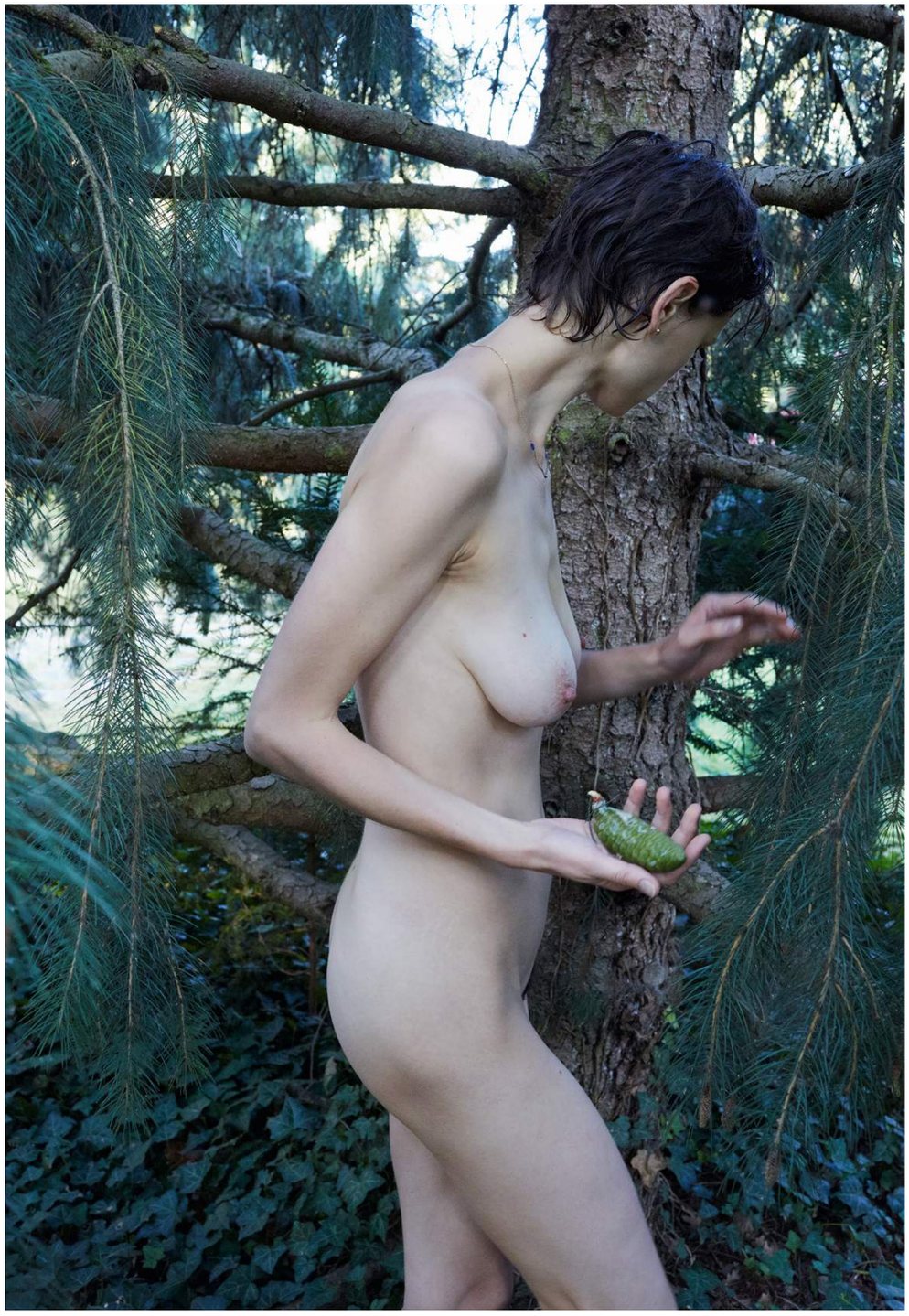


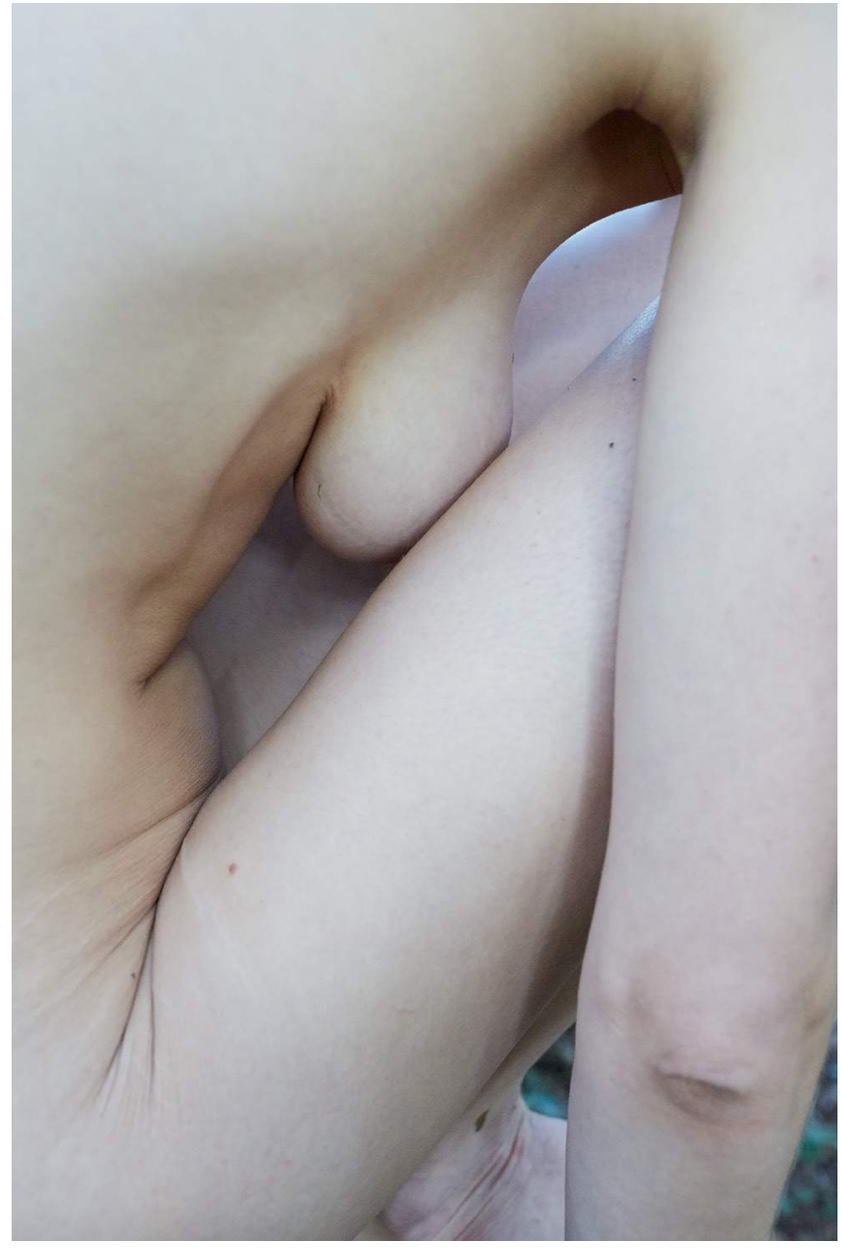










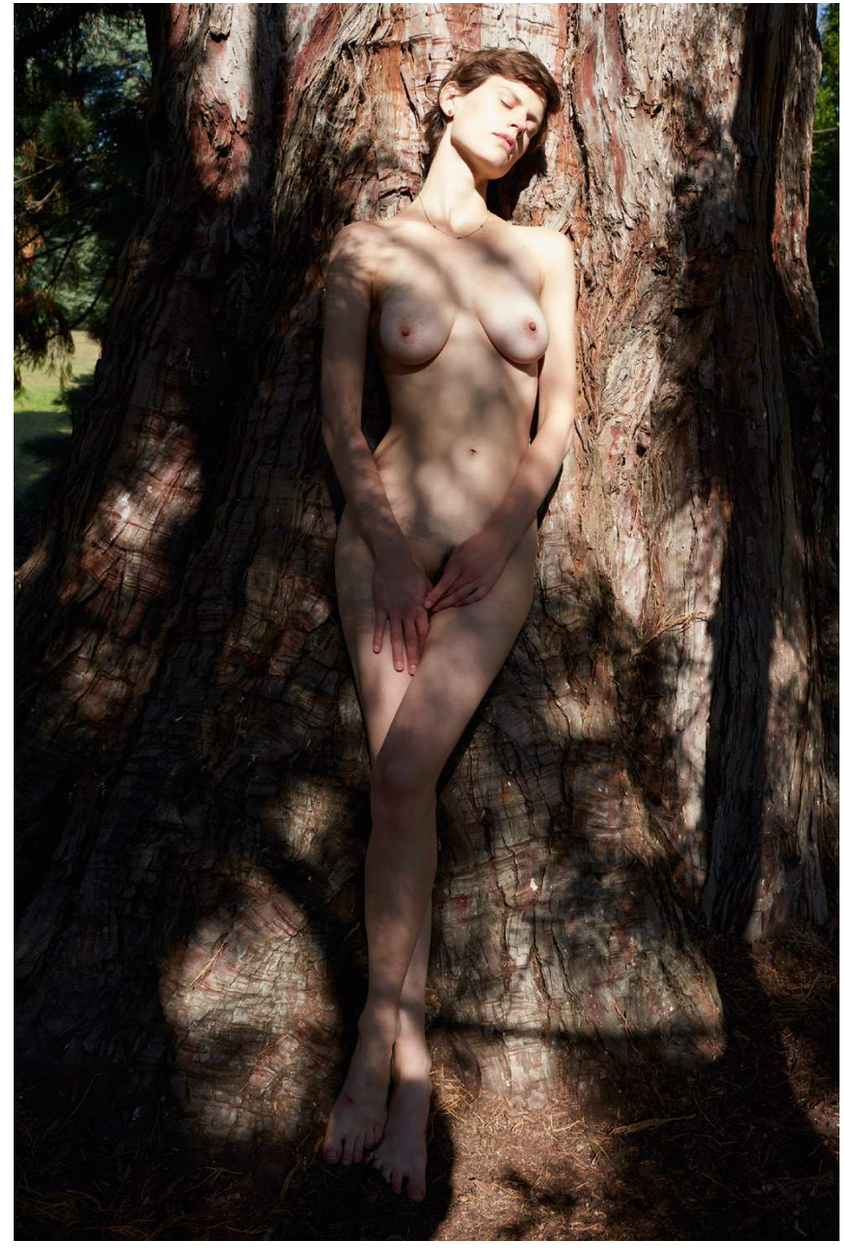


‘I’ve sat opposite people on trains while they’ve been looking at pictures of me in a magazine. They don’t recognise me; they never make the association between the pictures and a person who might sit opposite them on trains, or live next door to them.’

Saskia de Brauw

‘I’d never worked with Juergen before and was a little nervous about what he was going to do. But I realised that he sees poetry in so much of the world, whether that’s a pebble or a wound on a knee or a scratch on a belly. He was so much more subtle as a person than I thought he might be. It was rather touching.’

Saskia de Brauw



Model: Saskia de Brauw c/o DNA Models. Make-up: Camille Lutz. Photo Assistance: Karin Xiao. Production: JN Production. Retouching: Quickfix Retouch.

I'm often asked the question: 'What is beauty for you?'

But I don't really think in those terms. I just find a lot of things are beautiful when you open your mind. Making these pictures really made me think – not so much about beauty or models, but how was I going to shoot them, and where, and how will they come out. Stuff like that. It's why I'm often quite nervous before a shoot.

The night before I was shooting Liya in Paris, I found myself having a really odd dream. And I'm not sure where this came from. It clearly had something to do with the fact that I'd photographed a plastic surgeon in June. I was very dubious about that whole scene, and I certainly feel it is completely unnecessary for me to even consider anything like that. But this plastic surgeon really intrigued me – a lot of what he was saying made sense, he seemed very proficient – and I liked him.

He also said he knows my work well. Since most fashion photographers' pictures are so heavily airbrushed, he uses mine as a reference for his own work. That certainly perplexed me.

Anyway, that night, I had this dream in which I had to photograph an older lady instead of Liya. 'You can't photograph me yet, though,' said the lady, 'We have to go to my plastic surgeon first.'

All of sudden, I found myself at the plastic surgery with these two muscular guys in all white, violently taking *me*, instead of the lady, down to the chair. I was shouting, 'No, you've got the wrong person, I totally don't want any of that. I'm fine, I'm happy with myself.'

Then they gave me something and I was out cold.

When I woke up and looked in the mirror, it was the worst sight you could possibly imagine; it didn't look like me anymore. My face was all stretched and one of my ears was hanging right down. 'Guys!' I started shouting, 'What the hell has happened here?'

'Oh, I'm really sorry,' replied one of them. 'That was a bit of a mistake…'

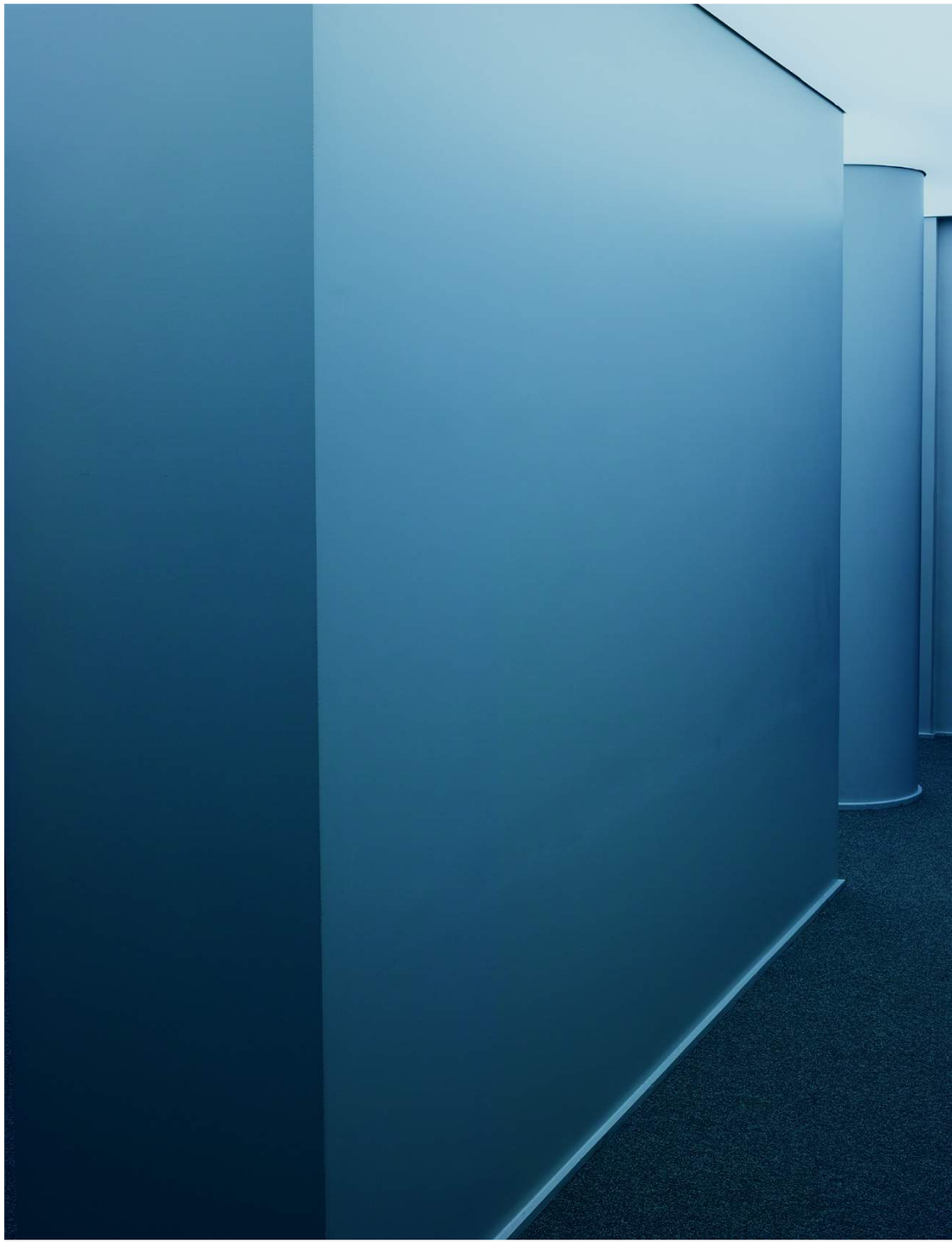
I suddenly woke up and found myself sweating in bed. Then I had to take the photographs of Liya.

Juergen Teller, September 2014

‘Scent remains very mysterious, even for me.’

Daniela Andrier makes the perfumes that make us elegant.

By Jonathan Wingfield
Photographs by Mario Palmieri



When *System* decided that each of its four cover stars should have her own specially designed perfume impregnated onto the cover band, the obvious 'nose' to approach was Daniela Andrier. As perfumer for Givaudan, the global fragrance leader, Andrier has created some of the most elegant scents in recent times for brands such as Bulgari, Bottega Veneta, Maison Martin Margiela and, perhaps most significantly, Prada, for whom she has conjured up practically every perfume over the past decade.

Born in Heidelberg, Germany and now based in Paris, Andrier studied philosophy at the Sorbonne before opting for a career in perfume. Despite suffering from chronic sinusitis as a child, her prodigious ability to blend olfactory ingredients that stir the most profound of emotions has led to a stellar career in the global perfume industry, and has been awarded the *Ordres des arts et des lettres* by the French Ministry of Culture.

Where much of today's in-your-face perfumery is as regressive as it is aggressive, Andrier's creations are an exercise in restraint and subtlety. And when you consider that 1,500 new fragrances were launched in 2013 alone (in that same year, the fragrance market generated 34 billion euros), subtle scent is as anomalous as it sounds – and smells. As Andrier herself charmingly put it: 'It's like being in a quiet little seaside paradise that's surrounded by superyachts.'

To accompany the four olfactory wonders that she's created exclusively for *System*: *Eau de Stella, Eau de Liya, Eau de Lara* and *Eau de Saskia*, Daniela Andrier graciously invited us in to both her Parisian home studio and to Givaudan's fragrance laboratory to discuss what she calls her 'struggle against inelegant perfumery'.

Do you have a first olfactory memory?
I have lots, and they're all important to me. In the work of a perfumer, these references in your memory are like markers that you constantly refer to – almost like an alphabet. One of the very first olfactory memories is linked to a cream that you find in Germany, *Penaten-Creme*, which has a wonderful scent and is used on babies' bottoms. I remember that scent perfectly; it is like a magical trigger to the past. For me, it's the fragrance of maternity and the pleasure that comes from being taken care of.

'When I was small, I got a coffee bean stuck up my nose. I loved the smell of coffee so much that I wanted to be completely engulfed by it.'

You recall this from being a baby?
Yes, it's so powerful because I really was a baby at the time; I can see myself lying down and being dried after a bath and having the cream put on me. It's a good example of my connection with smells and how significant they are to me; they have always been my means of communication with the world.

Was smell already the most developed sense for you as a child?
Yes, but without recognising it. When I was small, I put a coffee bean in my nose because I loved the smell of coffee and wanted to be engulfed by it. It got stuck up my nose, and I had to go to hospital to have it removed. Everything for me had an odour. As a child, I took these smells and turned them into a parallel language. The language of words and letters is spoken and explained whereas the odours of life just are beyond explanation. A flower that smells good, smells good; there is no filter. Smell is extremely sincere and truthful; nothing is manipulated, hidden or dissimulated.

Do the smells from your childhood play an important role in the perfumes you've since gone on to create?
Well, I've never tried to replicate the notes in *Penaten-Creme*, but it has a connection with the slightly balsamic notes that I've since found again elsewhere. There are smells that I continue to use that are nearly all linked to childhood experiences in Italy. What's more, I work almost entirely with Italian brands; I didn't decide that, that's just how it's worked out.

Why Italy in particular?
Italy is the birthplace of my *joie de vivre*… I was born in Germany, but between the ages of about four and seven, we'd spend two months every summer in Italy. The flavours, smells and sensations that have touched me most come from Italy: happiness, food and wonderful fragrances such as pine needles on the ground warming in the sun, the smell of the sea in the near distance, sheets smelling of lavender and iris. Those particular notes are a complete obsession for me.

So you have always associated smells with happy times?
Above all, with life. And I generally have no olfactory memories associated with sad things. There are no smells I associate with my mother's death. I'd

asked to see her when she passed away – I was 13, and she was 42.

Is that universal? Does the brain have a means of filtering out those smells associated with sad things?
That's very hard for me to answer. It's such a personal thing. There are probably people who only have memories of terrible smells, of horrible experiences. Personally, I have images of sad things, but not smells.

Both Proust and scientists have explored this extraordinary rapport between smell and emotional memory. How do you define or indeed rationalise it?
I don't rationalise it; I'm on Proust's side because his writing touches me. I've obviously read scientific texts; I find them interesting, but I'm less touched. There's a Proust phrase I really like: '*Je le trouvai tout bourdonnant de l'odeur des aubépines*.' He's describing a path: *bourdonnant* [humming] is the word used to describe the noise insects make, as if the pathway is humming with the fragrance of the hawthorn. The notion of 'humming' here is beautiful, as if the flowers are little insects re-sowing new flowers – something that refers to life.

Poetry linked to smell is important then?
Yes. For me, smells allow us access to something very poetic. And this links to time: the time we are here, what came before us, our own history, what is it about the past that determines the present; the relationship to love, what we loved and what we love now; the continuity and intermittence of feelings. For all these things, I think perfume is the long-term common thread.

Like a moving time capsule.
It's like an amazing time travel agent that takes you into the past. But it isn't simply about nostalgia; it's not like when you go to the house where you once lived, and it's not the same colour anymore, or the garden has changed. You only partially find what you knew, whereas smell remains extremely loyal.

It's a complete experience.
Yes, because I find photographic memory incomplete. Photography will give you faces, physics, narrative, but it's only an image, and it doesn't tell you anything about feelings. It's only the camera's field of vision you see: you don't see the person who took the picture or what is behind them; you can't sense the sadness or happiness that surrounds that field of vision. For me smells are a more sincere and precise encapsulation of what you felt at that moment, they allow you to connect with a broader emotional memory.

Perfume has a great capacity to take us beyond a memory created through photo albums or what our parents tell us. It's difficult to separate what we remember and what we've been told, but olfactory memories cannot be created artificially. Just because your mother told you something smelled like that, it doesn't automatically become a memory for you.

Do you consider your nose as a gift?
I think we all have the capacity to smell and record smells; I don't think one nose is more competent than another. But I do think that we perfumers have a sensitivity that is much more developed than most people. Until I found out this job existed, I thought that everyone had the same relationship with smell. It's only later on in life that we start realising we don't all perceive things in the same way. Childhood conflict stems from the fact children think everyone lives in the same way: that noise is the same for everyone, that pain is the same for everyone, that cherries taste the same for everyone… Personally, I thought that everyone had this same relationship with smell; it was only when I was an adult that I realised it wasn't the case.

When did you first become aware of perfumes?
There were family references of course: my father wore *Eau Sauvage*, my mother *Calèche* and *Rive Gauche*, as well as a Chloé perfume from that time. From a very young age, I'd visit perfume shops as a girl in Germany. And then later in Paris, I would go to Galeries Lafayette and smell all the new perfumes; there were many less products at the time, but I knew every single one perfectly. My first boyfriend came from a very traditional French family and they all wore Guerlain perfumes: the mother wore *Shalimar*, the sister wore *L'Heure Bleue*. For my 17th birthday he bought me *Chamade*, which I adored. His father wore *Eau Sauvage* just like my father, and he himself wore *Pour Homme* by Yves Saint Laurent, which is an extraordinary perfume.

'Photography gives you faces, physics, narrative, but it's only an image. For me, smells allow you to connect with a broader emotional memory.'

How do you react today when you walk past someone wearing one of those perfumes?
It affects me a lot, still to this day. Rive Gauche is the most powerful of all as it was my mother's perfume. But it is always a happy feeling.

At what age did you discover that making perfumes was a profession?
I was 22 years old. A lady I met at a party said to me, 'I wanted to be a perfumer but I couldn't because I have chronic sinusitis.' I too had chronic sinusitis from the age of 15 – I had terrible allergies – and the moment she said this to me was like a revelation. I said to myself, 'I will become a perfumer and for me the sinusitis won't be a problem.' I decided there and then. It was amazing, like this sort of ultimate confidence that arrived with that moment. Luckily, I ended up doing a desensitisation to dust mites, and the allergies passed.

What was your first step to getting into perfume making?
My mother often dressed in Saint Laurent in the 1970s, so when I discovered this profession, I naively thought that it was Saint Laurent himself who created his own perfumes. So I called the Saint Laurent offices and said I would like to be a perfumer. They told me they weren't perfumers and that I should go to a school in Versailles called ISIPCA. At the time I was studying philosophy, and ISIPCA told me I had to do two years of chemistry before I could go there. By chance, a friend of mine met Jacques Polge the Chanel perfumer, and thanks to him I got an internship at Chanel. It really was luck. I was at Chanel in 1988, when I was 24.

Did Jacques Polge recognise your gift for smell?
He was very encouraging and seemed to think that there was a good chance I would make it. Without him, I don't think I would have had such a smooth career path. I did my internship with him, then went to Grasse to study, then went to Robertet, a perfume company in Grasse. It was there I won my first perfume – for an Italian brand.

Italian brands from the very start.
It's funny, it's always been Italy! I then became the assistant of a perfumer called Edouard Fléchier, who had created *Poison* for Dior. He was someone who had a true perfumer's style and character. He would smell my work and say, 'Take that out, you don't need this, make it simpler.' It was all about simplifying, and that is something that's always stayed with me.

How do you define your role as a perfumer: is it a trade, a craft, an artistic practice?
For me it borrows a lot from artistic activities – there are lots of parallels between music and painting and perfume – but I wouldn't ever consider myself an artist. You do however get that anxiety of creation, the fear of the blank canvas. There are days when it just flows in abundance, others when there's a void.

To what extent do you consider creating perfumes a commercial exercise?
Of course I want success – I want the brands to be successful, so I respect their codes – but I don't want to make uninteresting perfumes that simply follow the current market trends. When people wear my perfumes, I want them to tell them something; for it to be more than just a perfume from a known brand that is indistinguishable from many others.

Are there any particular *tendences* in today's perfumes?
The recurring theme is gourmandise. There's too much sugar and patchouli, but it works. It's more than a trend; it's a tidal wave. It's like being in a quiet little seaside paradise that's surrounded by superyachts. I try to make perfumes that can be moving, but that also pass the test with consumers. With *Infusion d'Iris*, women have told me it's as though their own personal memories are captured within a perfume.

Considering all the emotional significance tied to scents, do you think perfumers have a responsibility?
Absolutely. I think our responsibility is to nourish people's emotions. We no longer associate individuals so much with certain perfumes, because so many people wear the same thing. It's great creating perfumes that represent four per cent of the market, but you need to find the right balance.

Does subtlety still have its place in the market today?
I think so. If it's well marketed, with the correct packaging and so on, then you could have a lot of success. If you're not going to push the marketing then you

'The recurring theme in today's big perfume trends is gourmandise, with too much sugar and patchouli. It's more than a trend it's a tidal wave.'

have to have a perfume that enchants people. There is no advertising for *Infusion d'Iris* – it's never on television, or in the cinema and rarely in the press – but it has many loyal fans. It has a capacity to provoke an incredible love for it.

But this seems like an exception.
I think the market will become increasingly segmented: there'll be the big names with big strong perfumes that last a whole day, with television ads that make all the promises, to be rich, in love and so on. And then there'll be luxury perfumery for people who don't want to be smelled from ten metres away, where more money is spent on the production than the advertising.

What I'd love to talk about now – something I know very little about in fact – is the actual perfume-making process…
Well, it's never the same.

That's what I find interesting.
You have certain clients, big groups with a lot of brands, who will develop some perfumes without a specific brand in mind. If the perfumer works blindly on, say, an oriental perfume, it gets tested and retested, and after four years it will end up in a bottle. But at no point has the perfumer worked towards a specific brand perfume. Personally, I cannot work like that. I need it to be for something, for someone. I am given a brief by the client; the person who has the licence.

Can you tell me about the brief… is it a written description or visual?
I'm usually given information such as: it's a major women's launch for 2016, it has to express the brand's values, we need it to be floral, this is the budget, this is the deadline… But ultimately, you ask a perfumer to give their vision.

So it's not so much a description…
Less so now. The perfume briefs I'd get in the 1990s were almost comically descriptive. I remember one saying, '*This is for the woman who's never been unfaithful to her husband, but is soon going to be.*' Fortunately the clients returned to a more sincere approach once they discovered that didn't work.

How do you go about expressing the DNA of a particular fashion house through a perfume?
I work by empathy: I'm trying to give a scent to a world that I see before me. But it's also a fantasy about what that world represents. So when it comes to a brief, well with me at least, there's very little information, because what I'm being asked to transcribe is that very specific fantasy. What I create for Prada, I could *only* create for Prada. What I create for Bulgari is very different because it's inspired by a different brand with different people; it's specifically inspired by precious stones. Then Bottega Veneta is a very precisely written brief, an olfactory narration. But as I said, another client may simply say, 'This is the brand. This is the budget. Do what feels best. Present it in three weeks' time.'

When you get given such a vague brief, what do you start with?
Generally these days, I start with my own archives and references. It is very intuitive work. Perfumes are a song I've never sung before. It is like getting very close up to a beautiful-looking bird – that's always an image that comes back to me – you can observe it very closely and see all its beautiful colours, but you mustn't move too close or it will fly away.

Do you have a woman or man in mind when you create a perfume?
No. From that first moment of creation, it's very intuitive, something that comes in little spurts, like a painter. I'll find a name – you have to find one for the development period – then I go to work. I start by trying a variety of things all based on a structure that was there right from the beginning, and which is totally free. It comes from a 'trip'. I don't like that term, but that is where it comes from. It's done with lots of love and intuition and empathy; I can't describe it any other way because it's very mysterious even for me.

Beyond that, the work comes from experience: things that I know how to do, what goes together, what won't work. Then there are aesthetic choices that are totally subjective…

…that reflect your personal taste.
Exactly. Experience, experimentation and something almost childlike: how about we try this, this could be fun… Of course, all this is guided by the client's opinion, which is obviously very important. The first thing I propose comes from the heart, and after that it gets reworked based on my experience, my tastes, experimentation, comments from the client, comments from the people I work with at Givaudan

'Perfume briefs in the 1990s were comical: *"For the woman who's never been unfaithful to her husband, but is soon going to be."*'

who are professionals in perfume, and then finally consumers' tastes. The client leads me to the perfume form that is the most comprehensible for the largest audience – it's a lovely collaboration.

Is the first time you share the perfume with a client done face to face?
Yes, in person. It's something sacred, in the sense that you are presenting something you've created and it's important to see how people react. You're impatient for that reaction.

If it's not quite what they wanted does that hurt?
It happened a lot when I was younger, these days hardly at all. That's experience and working with the right people. When people actively seek to work with you then it means they like your approach. When you're young you want to please everyone, in general. You haven't yet made any choices, and it's harder to defend your ideas.

You mentioned the three-week deadline. Is this typical, or can it be longer?
The three-week deadline is only for the first submission. The development period varies hugely depending on the client; I can develop a perfume in two months or over two years. I'm better at deploying my ability to sprint rather than run a marathon. It's exciting when it has to be now, I feel like it's more important. And when I'm working on the final stages of a perfume, I'm in a very loving state. I devote my time exclusively to one thing, so I become most creative.

Is there much back and forth between you and the client?
It can be every week for a year. It can reach twice a week during intense periods. They'll say the top notes are missing something nice, it's missing a smile – two hours later they'll say there's a hollow. After six hours they can't smell anything at all.

It's often said that all variations of musical notes have been exhausted. Is it the same case for perfume?
The history of perfume is 3,000 years old. But its current form – that revolution in perfume when we moved away from only using essential oils to developing synthetic scents – has only existed for a century. And *couturiers* developing perfumes dates back only 50-60 years. So it's a brief history that hasn't been exhausted. Plus, there are new raw materials constantly being developed. At Givaudan we're researching, constructing, inventing, producing; we have the patents for *molecules captives* which bring new facets to existing families of scents.

So there is still the possibility of creating a perfume revolution.
Well, perhaps more evolution than revolution. *Eau Sauvage*, which is a synthesis of jasmine, was a revolution, and there has been a whole lineage of perfumes that have descended from it. It's true that in this, albeit short, history, everything can be more or less classified. But when you think about *L'Eau d'Issey* by Issey Miyake, which personally I don't like aesthetically but which provoked a revolution with its marine notes and sea spray notes: it was a total break from everything that came before it. When Thierry Mugler's *Angel* came out, nothing had existed before like that. Yes, there was sweet amber and patchouli aspects to it, and yes there are similar oriental perfumes that already existed, but there was also the caramel scent which brought a new dimension.

Completely new and innovative things are rarely the most beautiful. Plus, today's innovation is much more regressive: it's become something that reassures us and reminds us of things we eat, childlike things.

So as consumers we're drawn to what we already know.
When you ask consumers what they like, they'll chose the most familiar option. There's a German expression: 'What the countryman doesn't know, he will never eat.' So when you make a perfume, you need to find a way through that familiarity, either with a reassuring, beautiful or elegant emotion that avoids all the diktats of the day.

Do you conceive men's perfumes differently to women's?
No, not at all. I don't like it when people say this is a masculine perfume and this is a feminine perfume. I think that perfumes should be worn by anyone. They are lovely fragrances that can work for a man or a woman. When it really is for a man or for a woman then for me that's a cliché. And so there's a lack of freedom.

Do certain perfumes react differently on different skins?

'I don't like it when people say this is a masculine fragrance and this is a feminine fragrance. If they can't be worn by anyone, they just beome clichés.'

There are some skins on which a perfume smells terrible, due to sweat, acidity, what you eat, creams you use, dryness and so on. You also have skins that render all perfumes magnificent.

Once one of your perfumes has been accepted by the client, do you play any role in its marketing or the imagery?
No, only in the storytelling to identify the best ingredients in the perfume to highlight and market, because using them all would be confusing.

What's your general opinion on perfume marketing?
I don't believe you can sell a perfume with falseness, when marketing tries to tell stories that simply aren't true. You have to respect the consumer as someone who *is* able to understand and who doesn't need a sensationalist story told to them. What should make them dream is the scent itself, not the olfactory description. Marketing often feels the need to underline this sensationalist side. 'It's the best…' 'The greatest…' It doesn't come from the moon; it is only a perfume.

What about the imagery associated with perfume marketing?
I think it's a complicated relationship. I myself am a manipulated consumer. But marketing isn't what I prefer about the evolution of society.

What are your thoughts on perfume being so often linked to beauty, sex appeal and power?
For me it means a lot: a beautiful perfume is what envelops a person. A woman who wears a perfume that a man likes will be very sexy and desirable.

Is it the same thing for beauty?
I think so. A beautiful woman who enters the room and who has a lovely presence and whose perfume suits her… it's part of a whole. While marketing promises wealth and lovers and power, it doesn't bring you love. However, if you meet your love then you are highly likely to associate their perfume with all those things.

Do you find yourself thinking about the people you're with and the perfumes they wear? 'My God, that perfume really doesn't suit you!'
Most of the time. I find that 80 per cent of perfume wearers don't wear the right perfume. Most women and men buy the bestselling perfume. They choose perfumes because of the advertising, or because of the brand, or because it is familiar to them. They buy for the wrong reasons. Perfume stores should employ customer advisors.

To have a successful perfume, do you think that the marketing budgets have to be big?
If you have the right perfume but the wrong marketing and the wrong bottle then it won't work. If you have the right bottle and marketing but the perfume isn't good… people won't buy it again.

What makes a classic perfume?
It's hard to say. In many countries' top five perfumes, you still have *Chanel N°5*. It's dated, but there. *Angel* is a classic now, too. It's a question of iconic status. If you blind test *Chanel N°5*, people don't always like it. But it's an icon that's stronger than any one of its elements. To be a classic everything must be perfect: the perfect bottle, a *jus* that never disappoints, and a coherent advertising strategy that gets played out over many years but always stays true to its initial spirit.

Do you wear perfumes yourself?
I wear a lot of what I'm working on, to evaluate it, and because it's what's most present in my mind, and so it's what makes me happiest. I also wear Prada's *Infusion d'Iris* a lot; it's the only perfume I've got through several bottles of.

Have you ever tried to create a perfume for yourself?
Never. I think I create them all for myself, with everything I love in perfume, so there wouldn't be anything else I could add to make it my own.

Do you have an unrealised ambition in perfume making?
That an elegant perfume like *Infusion d'Iris* takes four per cent of the market. Inelegant perfumery is like bad lighting, bad films, bad television – it's sad and depressing. I genuinely want perfume to retain something moving and elegant. You can be someone without wealth, and without amazing clothes, but with a perfume you can give yourself an allure and elegance. That, to me, is magic.

'While marketing promises wealth, lovers and power, it doesn't bring you love. But you're likely to associate your love's perfume with all those things.'

Rich behaviour

The crude antics of China's misbehaving tycoons. By Hung Huang. Illustration by François Berthoud.

As usual, it was a gorgeous spread laid out by Dior. The guests were A-list: local tycoons, political heavyweights and celebrities galore with the likes of Natalie Portman and Zhang Ziyi in attendance. All guests were dressed in the latest season of Dior, hair coiffed, with a small Lady Dior perched on their arms. Everything was perfect, that is until five minutes after the main course was served. The Chinese guests politely picked at the main – prepared by a two-star Michelin chef flown in from Paris – and then left their seats in search of a photo opportunity with the celebrities.

I was at the head table with Natalie Portman when suddenly Natalie, her manager and myself were the only people still there. Zhang Ziyi had already been ushered away for pictures. 'Is this normal?' Natalie's manager asked me. 'It would be a bit rude if this happened at home.'

What can I say? It's China.

Most images of Chinese banquets show officials sitting stiffly around the dinner table. No one would run around looking for photo ops. But that is also because the host is probably a high-ranking government official.

The Chinese rich only let loose when no officials are around – they behave totally differently at Chinese official banquets. They are like primary-school students eating dinner with the school principle. They speak in turns, don't budge from their seats and sometimes, even raise their hands to signal they have something to say. I once sat at a lunch with 12 tycoons and a party secretary. The party secretary had to leave due to an emergency; the tycoons just abandoned the half-eaten food and left. The waiters went to fetch a new course and came back to a empty dining room – I was the only one still there.

As time passes, this does not bother me any more. I no longer think it's rude; it's just how we party in this particular part of the world.

For the past ten years, there has been a huge competition among Chinese corporations to see who can get A-list stars to make guest appearances at their annual corporate gatherings. I can deal with that, it's just business. What is more difficult are the hours of *Idol*-like singing by employees through the crappiest speakers. If you happen to survive the karaoke competition, you will definitely die during the tycoon's on-stage critique of your and your colleagues' performances. It is not just a casual critique; it is also the time to distribute annual bonuses based on these very same performances.

I was at one such event hosted by the Chengdu Exhibition Corporation. The tycoon, Deng Hong, is the local partner for Intercontinental Hotels in Chengdu; he also commissioned Zaha Hadid to build a curvaceous new exhibition centre in the city. He is one of the richest men in Sichuan Province, and the biggest developer in Chengdu. At the end of his employees' performances, he grabbed the microphone:

'I want to compliment the duet by the doormen from Chengdu Intercontinental,' he said. 'I know it's hard to find time to practise. You must have used your free time. I want to give you each a bonus of 50,000 yuan (a year's wages for the doormen) to show you I liked your number!'

At this point, a woman with a rice sack came on stage, and the singers were called up. Deng Hong pulled out stacks of bills and handed the money to the singers. The crowd cheered – I was stupefied.

When I told people about this afterwards, I was told this was quite normal and even 'civilised'.

'I know a tycoon who throws cash into the air and makes his employees scurry around trying to grab as much money as possible,' one friend told me. 'It was humiliating, but people loved it.'

I believe all Chinese tycoons have a 'Mao Complex', their childhood was so dominated by the dictator that it is has left a permanent imprint. Somewhere inside the capitalist entrepreneur, there is a little Mao dying to come out.

The worst behaviour by Chinese tycoons is towards women. I had dinner once with the CEO of the largest publishing house in China. It was a small dinner, and among the guests was his editor for fiction, a woman in her early thirties. During the course of the dinner, the tycoon berated her about her department's financial performance:

'Do this again,' screamed the tycoon, 'and I will sell you to a brothel.'

The female director winced but did not say anything. I was in shock. I objected to his crudeness.

'What are *you*?' he asked me, 'Woman's Lib or something?'

'Yes, so what?' I demanded.

'Oh, that's all crap,' he said. 'She would double her salary if she worked in a brothel. But she is over 30, so she would end up losing money for the brothel, too.'

All the men at the table laughed. And to my horror, the fiction director was laughing with them.

Accidental enterprise

The rise and rise of *The Business of Fashion*.
By Imran Amed. Illustration by François Berthoud.

In university and at business school, I took lots of courses on entrepreneurship. These classes would address every aspect of creating a new business, from starting with a killer idea and writing a business plan to pitching investors and building a team. It was a highly structured – if somewhat formulaic – approach to business building.

But what if your business didn't start as a business idea, but a passion project? What if you didn't come up with a master plan, and instead had to figure one out as you went along? What if your new business happened to be in media, an industry that seemed to be on the verge of collapsing? This was the kind of journey business school did not prepare me for.

After years in management consulting, I had just left my first entrepreneurial venture in fashion – and it had been a failure. I had been keeping a private blog so my family and friends could live my fashion adventure vicariously, but it had been cut short. What was I going to do now?

I had already met a few fashion bloggers – Diane Pernet, Anina Trepte and Scott Schuman – and I wondered why nobody was writing about the fashion business. So in 2007 with $100 and rudimentary design skills in Powerpoint, I skinned a new blog like a black-and-white newspaper, created a clunky looking header, and called it 'The Business of Fashion'. It probably took just two hours to set up.

In the beginning I wrote one or two articles per week. I came up with ideas, conducted research, proofed and copyedited, selected and cropped the images, and pressed the publish button. It was fun and so easy!

Alongside my consulting work, I began learning about the fashion business by writing about it. It became a cathartic, creative process that helped me make sense of an industry that was undergoing significant disruption caused by the combined forces of globalisation, the digital revolution and the Great Recession.

My motivation came from the positive feedback I got from the budding *BoF* community. In January 2007, *BoF* had 191 visitors, from there people seemed to magically discover it. As a data junkie, it was thrilling to see the traffic stats tick up every month without any marketing whatsoever. With the rise of Facebook and Twitter, it became even easier for people to share *BoF* articles. I began to understand, first-hand, the power of original content and ideas in the digital age and how these could be used to build a brand and global audience.

BoF took on a life of its own. It could not have happened without the power of the web, which helped connect me with a global community. I was able to build *BoF* slowly, with a series of little digital experiments all focused on creating high-quality content based on insight, analysis and ideas.

Five years later I found myself financing a blog, with no revenue model, supported by a passionate team of part-time employees and volunteer contributors in more than a dozen countries. All the while I managed *BoF* from my flat in London while travelling the world advising global fashion companies, teaching at Central Saint Martins, and working with technology start-ups.

I was up at all hours of the night, scrambling to keep up with everything; I had no infrastructure or budget to support what had now grown from a one-man band into a small virtual team split across continents. I felt a big sense of responsibility to deliver only the highest quality content, but I wasn't sure how I would keep it going.

It soon became clear that of all the arrows in my fashion quiver, it was *BoF* that had the potential to become something that could last. It also presented the most interesting challenge and was closest to my heart. But I also knew it could only continue to grow if I focused on it full time, built a proper team, and raised some financing. Those business school classes actually did come in handy!

In 2013, with the support of investors who saw potential in *BoF*, I began to build a full-time team. There are now 14 of us working in a small office in London. Having a team has been the most important factor in our continued growth, and is the key to our future success. I focus on finding fellow fashion nerds who are smart and passionate about the business of fashion. This continues to be the foundation of *BoF*'s success.

But having a team and investors, has also brought a whole set of new challenges and lessons. Some days, it can make decision-making a lot slower. I also spend more of my time in meetings and managing people, but I am still involved in creating and shaping *BoF* content and the path that we are taking.

These days, I don't have too much time to think about my journey. But I get the sense that this is only the beginning. It's the most exhilarating feeling to find meaning and purpose in your work.

Indeed when you can align your purpose and passion in life with your career, magical things can happen.

On her bike

Why the French designer cancelled her Spring/Summer 2015 show. By Vanessa Bruno. Illustration by François Berthoud.

I've always loved riding my bike, taking my time to travel from my house in Paris' third *arrondissement* to the office nearby. Even in the city, it's a good way to breathe, to look around you and to see the colours, the lights, the people walking by. It's my luxury and it suits me perfectly. It's not that I don't like riding around in taxis or beautiful sports cars, but rather that I like to decide when and where I change gears or pace – it's a game for me. To roll along, speed up, slow down when I please, whenever it feels right.

In business, like with bike riding, I also prefer to listen to myself as well as to the people that I dress. I've always wanted my designs to be of the *now,* to reflect a certain modernity but to follow their own pace, tempo and rhythm. As such, I wanted to build my *maison* organically and with security. I wanted to open boutiques when it was called for them to be opened, whether that was in Paris, Los Angeles or St Tropez. I wanted to create images with artists that I believed in like Mark Borthwick or Lou Doillon.

I love fashion week. I love the excitement of presenting our collections and ideas to the press, to friends and to buyers. However, a runway show lasts for the blink of an eye and the idea that one can present the work of an entire season in ten minutes is a ridiculous proposition. I started this brand independently but with a desire to be amongst others, to be with my team and with my clients who I might run into on the streets wearing pieces from current or previous seasons. I strive for those moments when clients thank me for the clothes I've created, in which they feel beautiful, serene and perhaps a little bit stronger. It's these intimate moments that are not conveyed when I step out onto the catwalk to take a bow at the end of a show, and they are far better than the applause of an audience.

I want to continue moving forward at my own speed and to be relevant to those I've always loved to dress: the young girl who's still a bit awkward and trying to discover herself, the young woman who loves fashion and trends, and those women who want, quite simply, to look beautiful. I want to return back to that certain something which is pure and honest; for instance, a garment that when worn, feels as if it's enveloping you, a garment that gives you a sense of both pleasure and desire. Today, the world moves very quickly, so much so that the new cannot exist. In this world, you can only strive to preserve the energy or feeling of something.

It's important to always listen to yourself and keep your own point of view. I don't want my *maison* to just be a post box receiving other people's wishes and wants for the season. I don't want to churn out collections and one pre-collection after another at a never-ending rate! I want my *maison* to be, quite literally, a home: for it to be a special place for me to make my desires and dreams come to fruition, as well as the curious and bohemian spirit of my clients.

For all of these reasons, I decided not to present a catwalk collection this season but rather to rekindle the intimacy of my brand, which is what is most valuable to me. And to the venue on the morning of my presentation, I will of course be riding my bike.

Mr Whitley's Town

The rise and fall of the Hollywood Hills. By Matt Tyrnauer. Illustration by François Berthoud.

Last year I moved back to my hometown, Los Angeles, and into an historic building in Whitley Heights, at the base of one of the Hollywood Hills. The first of the movie star colonies, Whitley Heights was developed in 1918, by Hobart J Whitley, a land speculator sometimes called 'The Father of Hollywood'. Whitley and his wife Gigi dreamed up the name Hollywood on their honeymoon and soon after established the Hollywood Hotel. The founder of 130 towns across the western United States, Whitley was inspired by southern Italian hill towns along the Amalfi Coast with their curving roads, houses cut into the landscape and walled gardens.

The Hill, as local residents call Whitley Heights, became home to Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, WC Fields, Tyrone Power, Carole Lombard, Rosalind Russell and Gloria Swanson, among many others. The building where I live – one of the original courtyard villas in LA, a mash-up of Seville and Tuscany – was built for Cecil B DeMille to house actors coming west from New York.

Although Whitley Heights is almost exactly the geographic centre of Los Angeles, even natives of the city have never heard of it. This is one of the bizarre charms of Los Angeles, a city which habitually ignores its history, a community based on immigrants coming to reinvent themselves and forget their pasts.

Before and during World War II, as hundreds of thousands were drawn to Southern California by the booming local entertainment economy, as well as real estate, oil, aerospace and war operations, Hollywood was at the epicentre, and Whitley's hill loomed over it all. The movers and shakers of the city below ascended to their tile-roofed villas and watched over the city from among the citrus groves. Most of the movie studios were actually located in Hollywood then, or nearby. Hollywood Boulevard was the very model of a 20th-century central business district, an elongated strip catering to automobile traffic, lined with smart businesses, restaurants, bars and movie palaces with a streetcar running down the centre.

When the war ended and development resumed, the decline of Hollywood began. The first harbinger of doom came in late 1948 when construction began on the Hollywood Freeway, now referred to by locals as 'the 101'. Hundreds of homes – many Craftsman and Victorian gems – were condemned. Streets were amputated, bisected, blocked off and obliterated. A trench, 50 feet deep and 100 feet across, was dug; a violent cut on the diagonal across the street grid of the city basin.

Of all the wrecked neighbourhoods in Los Angeles, none suffered more than Whitley Heights. It was bisected at its lowest point, a small valley between the two hills. The finest homes were in the valley, including those of Valentino, Lloyd and Chaplin**.** The Hollywood Freeway was inevitable and unstoppable, the product of the Federal Highway Act, the grandest federal project in the second half of the 20th century.

The effect of the Hollywood Freeway on Los Angeles was disastrous. The decline of Hollywood was almost immediate. Solid neighbourhoods laid open by the freeway descended into blight. Core residents of Hollywood relocated to the Westside and the newly opened Valley. Hollywood Boulevard's businesses started to shut. The NBC Studios, once at Sunset and Vine, moved to Burbank. Tourist traps took over the storefronts; indigents, drug dealers and hookers seemed to rival the number of bewildered tourists. My street became known as Murder Alley. It's not far from what was known as Crack Alley. Selma Avenue, near the YMCA, was called Vaseline Alley.

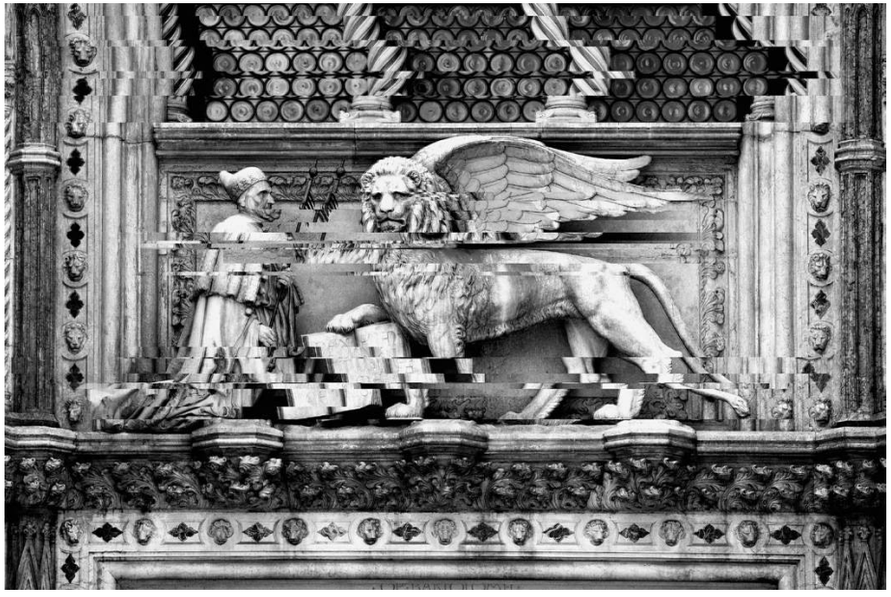
Flash forward to the late 1990s, when LA's economy recovered from the recession and race riots of the early 1990s. Smog was finally under control, and real estate prices had climbed, making a house in the hills desirable again. The crime rate in Hollywood began to decline, and Crack and Murder Alleys became known by their traditional names. Today people don't remember where they were.

Whitley Heights now flourishes, even with the Freeway. The part to the west of the freeway is larger and more cohesive, filled with walled gardens and carefully restored houses. Hobart J Whitley might even recognise it as what he envisioned a century ago.

Now gaining traction is a plan to cover the Hollywood Freeway with a park, which would knit together the old street grid, 'capping' the cut of the freeway with acres of greenway and recreational facilities. Eric Garcetti, the new Los Angeles mayor, is supporting the effort, called the Hollywood Central Park. In the next few months, feasibility studies will start, and community groups are rallying locals. And Hollywood may be restored to a semblance of what existed before it became a guinea pig for the Highway Act which caused one of the most beautiful places in the world to became a very famous but almost unliveable urban catastrophe.

Online/IRL

By Nicola Formichetti



The glitched images of Venice are like a digital vision of a city of traditions. It's two sides of the same reality – one online and one IRL. Our graphics team came up with these amazing visuals. Venice is the heart of Diesel, where its home is. We hosted a big event there back in April at the Arsenale. And Diesel is also contributing to the restauration of the Rialto Bridge.

Alchemy

By Reed Krakoff

Neoclassical, architectural, iconic and unexpected juxtaposition. The bringing together of disparate ideas to create an alchemy. In my work, I'm always starting with something recognisable and utilitarian, then looking to overlay it with the immediate and surprising.

What's the difference between Prada and Miu Miu?

The question we've been asking ourselves, answered by those who know best.

Photographs by Willy Vanderperre
Styling by Olivier Rizzo

Designing for me is a very complex process. There are many ideas that I want to express in one object, very often contradictory. The creative process in Miu Miu is completely different from that of Prada. Miu Miu is not as complicated and thought out as Prada. Rather than being young, Miu Miu is immediate. Prada is very sophisticated and considered; Miu Miu is much more naïve. The solution, when I am working on Miu Miu, has to come immediately, instinctively, spontaneously with whatever is available at the moment. If I think three times, I stop.

Miuccia Prada, September 2014

Mittel Europe/Uniform
Prada, Autumn/Winter 1994

Army Of Me/Uniform
Miu Miu, Autumn/Winter 2006

Birds Of Paradise
Prada, Autumn/Winter 2007

Garden of Eden
Miu Miu, Spring/Summer 2011

Black on Black/Jazz
Miu Miu, Spring/Summer 2013

Existentialist
Prada, Autumn/Winter 1995

1950s Sorbet
Miu Miu, Autumn/Winter 2007

1950s Shapes/In Bloom
Prada, Autumn/Winter 2010

Depression/Seduction 1940s
Prada, Autumn/Winter 2009

Drama/Innocence
Miu Miu, Autumn/Winter 2011

Men's Trousers Tailleur Printed
Prada, Resort 2015

Men's Trousers Tailleur Jacquard
Miu Miu, Autumn/Winter 2012

Glamour Hollywood
Prada, Spring/Summer 2007

Glamour Europe
Miu Miu, Autumn/Winter 2011

Pleated Skirt/Fake Bourgeoise
Miu Miu, Autumn/Winter 2007

Pleated Skirt/Surrealist Bourgeoise
Prada, Spring/Summer 2000

Fantasy Novice
Miu Miu, Spring/Summer 2008

Novice
Prada, Autumn/Winter 2008

Psychedelic Love
Miu Miu, Resort 2015

Psychedelic Revolt
Prada, Spring/Sumer 2014

Haute Mistress/Fur
Prada, Autumn/Winter 2013
& Spring/Summer 2007

Sensual Play/Fur
Miu Miu, Spring/Summer 2013

Fantasy Harlequin
Miu Miu, Spring/Summer 2008

Fantasy Nymph
Prada, Spring/Summer 2008

Mittel Europe/Uniform
Prada, Autumn/Winter 1994
Black wool belted military jacket with metal buttons; black wool and silk skirt; black leather boots with front zip.

Army of Me/Uniform
Miu Miu, Autumn/Winter 2006
Black wool fitted military jacket with small peplum and silk-satin trim and buttons; military green wool knickers.

Birds Of Paradise
Prada, Autumn/Winter 2007
Black wool/silk degradé cloquée coat with plastic fringe paillette and feather embroidery; black wool/silk with plastic fringe paillette embroidered skirt; plastic overprinted red and black mohair hat; military green silk socks; nude, military green and black duchesse-silk sandals with bow.

Garden of Eden
Miu Miu, Spring/Summer 2011
Black silk satin 'The Garden' printed dress with neon yellow pleated insert; black leather belt; neon green, silver and black Belle Époque shoes.

Black on Black/Jazz
Miu Miu, Spring/Summer 2013
Black duchesse silk coat; long dark blue leather gloves; black fox stole; black craquelé-leather pumps.

Existentialist
Prada, Autumn/Winter 1995
Black techno-wool double-breasted coat.

1950s Sorbet
Miu Miu, Autumn/Winter 2007
Pale blue jacquard plastic padded-polyester corset dress with black and pink décolleté and black waistband.

1950s Shapes/In Bloom
Prada, Autumn/Winter 2010
Black cirrée corset dress with white cotton ruffles and black-jet embroidered décolleté; black patent-leather pumps with white leather bows.

Depression/Seduction 1940s
Prada, Autumn/Winter 2009
Red crepe-wool tailleur: Prada, Autumn/Winter 2009; brown used leather men's belt: Prada, Spring/Summer 2007.

Drama/Innocence
Miu Miu, Autumn/Winter 2011
Black felted-wool coat with white silk-crepe collar.

Men's Trousers Tailleur Printed
Prada, Resort 2015
Dark blue check print wool-mix suit with top stitched embroidery; brown cotton shirt with top stitched details; dark blue and brown patent-leather slingback shoes with top stitched details.

Men's Trouser Tailleur Jacquard
Miu Miu, Autumn/Winter 2012
Tobacco Art-Noveau patterned jacquard wool mix suit; black organza Silk shirt; pink Op-Art pattern jacquard duchesse-silk neckpiece and matching pochette; turquoise Op-Art patterned jacquard duchesse silk tie with mirror embroidery; tobacco lizard leather belt; natural lizard, white patent-leather and tobacco suede platform boots with black duchesse-silk details.

Glamour Hollywood
Prada, Spring/Summer 2007
Violet duchess- silk dress; black duchesse silk turban; brown used leather men's belt.

Glamour Europe
Miu Miu, Autumn/Winter 2011
Black silk-crepe tea dress with silver paillette bird embroidery; black wool crepe mini-skirt with giant bows.

Pleated skirt/Fake Bourgeoise
Miu Liu, Autumn/Winter 2007
Camel wool cardigan; camel woven plastic crinoline box-pleated skirt; pink nylon stockings.

Pleated Skirt/Surrealist Bourgeoise
Prada, Spring/Summer 2000
Black fine wool cardigan; white crepe silk 'Red Lips' printed box-pleated skirt.

Fantasy Novice
Miu Miu, Spring/Summer 2008
Black silk-crepe long-sleeved short cape; black silk organza bloomers; white silk organza ruffled collar.

Novice
Prada, Autumn/Winter 2008
White cotton shirt with back button fastening; white cotton bib; nude stretch knit neckpiece; black cotton macramé lace skirt with matching peplum; dark brown suede, patent-leather and leather Art-Deco cut-out shoes.

Psychedelic Love
Miu Miu, Resort 2015
Emerald green suede sleeveless dress with dark blue embellishments; orange psychedelic-printed chiffon silk blouse with long scarf; dark blue suede lace-up sandals with mirrored heels.

Psychedelic Revolt
Prada, Spring/Sumer 2014
Cobalt blue with citrus bejewelled wool coat; military green wool bustier dress; military green wool bejewelled 'Rainbow Warrior' skirt; emerald green sports bandeau; military green sports skirt; black with citrus bejewelled sports socks; emerald green with pink rubber and sapphire bejewelled sports sandals.

Haute Mistress/Fur
Prada, Autumn/Winter 2013
& Spring/Summer 2007
Long natural black sable swing coat; black multi-layered silk chiffon with jet beads embroidered front-zip dress: Prada, Autumn/Winter 2013; black duchesse-silk pumps with Art-Deco heels: Prada, Spring/Summer 2007.

Sensual Play/Fur
Miu Miu, Spring/Summer 2013
White mink coat with black tie-dye plassée; black duchesse silk bra; beige plastic pencil skirt; black craquelé-leather pumps.

Fantasy Harlequin
Miu Miu, Spring/Summer 2008
Burgundy silk organza dress with 'Harlequin' print; red silk organza collar with ruffles.

Fantasy Nymph
Prada, Spring/Summer 2008
Forest green silk organza ruffled dress with 'Nymph' appliqué.

Models: Ine Neefs in Prada,
Lara Stone in Miu Miu.
Casting Director: Ashkey Brokaw.
Hair: Duffy c/o Streeters.
Make-up: Peter Philips
c/o Art & Commerce.
Photo Assistance: Romain Dubus
& Corentin Thevenet.
Styling Assistance: Alice Burnfield,
Niccolo Torelli and Ianthe Wright.
Manicure: Anaïs Jean-Louis.
Hair Assistance: Luce Tasca.
Make-up Assistance: Delphine Delain
and Aminata Guye.
Casting Assistan: Alexia Cheval.
Production by Floriane Desperier
at 4Oktober.
Thanks to Henri Coutant at Dtouch
and Stephanie Jaillet at TripleLeutz
Paris.

Special thanks to Fabio Zambernardi.

‘Do you find beauty in horror?’

Peter Philips, Creative and Image Director of Christian Dior Make-up, meets The Queen of Art-Gore, Cindy Sherman.

By Jerry Stafford
Photographs by Nikolas Koenig

Views of Cindy Sherman's studio, Greenwich Street, New York City.

HAINDLING
MARC JACOBS

MEGA BROWS
UNIBROW
ANGRY SCOTSMAN
WARNING:
ARTIST'S MOUSTACHES
SALVADOR DALI
REMBRANDT
MARK ROTHKO
VINCENT VAN GOGH
TOULOUSE LAUTREC

An early Cindy Sherman contact sheet, featuring the artist's first recorded attempt at transformation through make-up.

Peter Philips' first lip brush and one of his first eyeshadow palettes, the Dior 5 Couleurs palette.

Pages from Peter Philips' personal scrapbooks.

The eminent writer Simon Schama has described Cindy Sherman as 'an anatomist of self-consciousness, a collector of living masks.' The artist, whose work since the early 1970s has concentrated on 'series' of meticulously composed self-portraits using costumes and make-up to transform her identity – sometimes abstracting the image to such an extent that the human 'subject' is completely effaced – has possibly one of the most recognised names in the art world, but certainly the least recognised face.

Working in almost obsessive isolation, resolutely sourcing accessories, costumes, make-up and prosthetics for each new identity, the 60-year-old Sherman calls upon a wide range of cinematic, pictorial and personal influences to construct her frame, whether it be a rear-projected Tippi Hedren-like Hitchcock heroine, an illicit scene or gesture from a 1960s De Sica or Antonioni movie, Hans Bellmer's sexually charged yet childlike deconstructed dolls, the kitsch, nightmarish scenarios of a Dario Argento *giallo*, the gore and grotesque of Jan Švankmajer's stop-frame animated fairy tales or the lascivious grimace of Caravaggio's *Young Sick Bacchus*. Along the way, Sherman's little shop of horrors has become one of the most unsettling and unforgettable oeuvres of modern times, and the artist one of the most influential of the last half-century.

And it is an oeuvre which – on the surface at least – makes Belgian make-up maestro Peter Philips' own relationship to beauty and transformation almost laughably conventional. The former fashion-design student at Antwerp's Royal Academy of Fine Arts (alongside industry luminaries such as Dior couturier, Raf Simons, photographer, Willy Vanderperre and stylist, Olivier Rizzo) was named Creative and Image Director of Christian Dior Make-up in 2014, following a tenure as Chanel Make-up's Global Creative Director between 2008 and 2013.

Philips' reputation in the industry as an unparalleled cosmetic artist was initially forged in the late 1990s. His daring experiments with radical young creatives such as Raf Simons, for whom he infamously face painted a perfect-scale Mickey Mouse, landed him work with venerated photographers such as Irving Penn. At the helm of Chanel and now Dior, Philips has created not only many of the world's most visionary beauty products but also the most coveted, with every season of sell-out cosmetics redefining how women across the world make their own daily transformations.

Intrigued by the parallel and contradictory impulses between two artists whose careers, though disparate, have both been dedicated to cosmetic transformation, *System* invited Peter Philips to visit Cindy Sherman in her New York City studio.

Surrounded by carefully arranged shelves of vintage wax mannequin heads, torsos with glass eyes and exquisitely applied rouge and lipstick, boxes of platinum marcel-waved and beehived wigs, prosthetic breasts and other mysterious, unidentifiable protuberances, a conversation about their own respective methodologies and approaches to identity and aesthetics, to appearance and transformation, to the beautiful and the grotesque, begins to take shape.

Peter Philips: So this is where you work?
Cindy Sherman: Yes, I've been here for the last seven, eight years.
PP: It all looks so organised.
CS: Well, I'm not in the middle of producing any work right now; if I were then this place would be a real mess. I haven't actually shot anything in four years. I'm just busy with paperwork and my archive.
PP: So there's a long period of time between each series?
CS: Sometimes, yes. But this is mostly because of the MoMA show I had two years ago: there was preparation for that show and the catalogue, then it travelled, and then another show in Europe opened right after that. So with all this going on, I've not actually been able to make any new work… You have to be careful what you wish for! You finally get to this level of success and you don't have time to work anymore. I'm not like some artists who will go into the studio for six hours a day, every day, no matter what – 10 o'clock they are there, do whatever work they have to do and then they're done. I find that with photography you have to plan ahead. I generally need a six-month chunk of time to commit to a project.
PP: My father is a painter and he makes a living out of it – he has the most organised life. I wish I could be like that. He basically works office hours. I'm very chaotic but you have to have some sort of system in your head otherwise you get lost completely.
CS: So how did you get involved in make-up?
PP: I never had the ambition to work in make-up. I studied fashion design at the Antwerp Academy[1], not really

'While my girlfriends were turning themselves into ballerinas and princesses, I was more interested in turning into monsters or witches – ugly things.'

knowing that I wanted to be a fashion designer either, but I was intrigued by the whole myth of that school. When I was a kid I would see these very colourful-looking students walking around town, and I thought I wanted to be part of that. My stepfather had a catering business and the Belgian designer Ann Demeulemeester, and her team would always come in to buy sandwiches. So there I was, a young kid, and these 'birds of paradise' would come in with full make-up and hair. I just said to myself, 'Ok, I want to be part of that.'

CS: Did the school live up to your expectations?

PP: Well, while I was there I realised I really didn't want to be a fashion designer. But I discovered all the aspects that are part of the big picture we call fashion, including fashion design itself and grunge, minimalism and anti-fashion, and all that.

CS: Did that correspond to how you saw the world?

PP: Well, my training was in nude make-up, so I found I could do really great skin tones. Then, step-by-step, I discovered lipstick and eyeliner and shading and sculpting. That is why my portfolio became 90 per cent of beautiful nudes, and next to that some really extreme make-up – conceptual painted faces and that kind of stuff. And I think people found that combination quite intriguing.

CS: When did you make the jump into creating make-up?

PP: My first job as a make-up creator was with Chanel. They contacted me and introduced me to their studio. That's when I discovered this whole world of creating products, creating shades and creating textures. I am not a chemist, but at Chanel I then discovered this world of how to actually make what you'd normally just buy in a shop. With this, came the process of stepping away from doing niche editorial work for magazines and starting to really think about women and what they want – because ultimately, every woman wants to be fashionable, pretty and beautiful. So it was a great adventure, really fun. I also had a really good relationship with Karl Lagerfeld, so it was great to work with him in this link between beauty and fashion.

CS: And now Dior.

PP: After a while at Chanel, I found that I kind of missed that freelance world of shoots and shows. So about three years ago I stopped Chanel. And then I recently got invited by Dior, and I couldn't really say no to this magnificent big fashion house! Plus, I am pretty good friends with Raf Simons who I've known for 20 years. It has only been several months, so it is quite new – but it feels like two years already.

Cindy, where did your enthusiasm for disguise and transformation come from?

CS: From when I was a kid – maybe ten years old – because I had a suitcase of old clothes, old prom dresses and things like that, and I would play dress-up. Plus, I discovered some of my grandmother's clothes somewhere in the basement – she had died years before, or maybe it was even my great-grandmother because they were really old clothes, from the turn of the century. I

'My main motivation for doing make-up was fashion not beauty; it was the theatrical thing of enhancing the work of a designer.'

obviously make-up. So I kind of fell into this world because I have a good hand.

CS: The painterly side from your father, right?

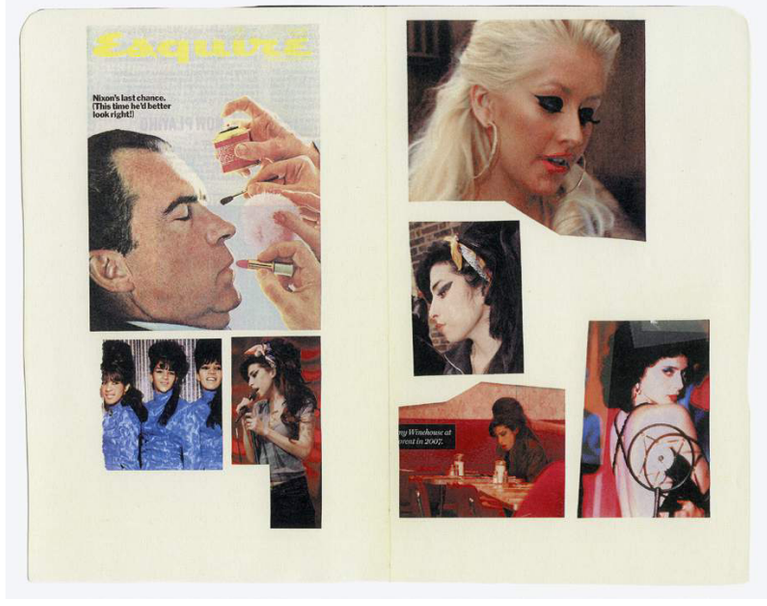
PP: Right. And Antwerp's a small world, and so fellow students quickly found out I could do make-up. They'd start asking me to do the make-up for their shows because they had no budget. That is how I kind of rolled into it.

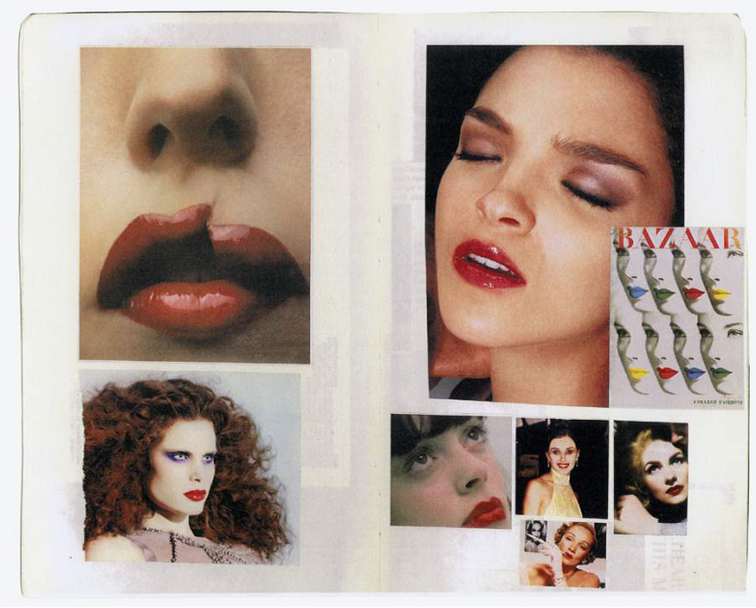
CS: But then actually creating new make-up products is a whole different thing.

PP: That's right. My main motivation for doing make-up was fashion and not really beauty; it was the theatrical thing of enhancing the work of a fashion designer or working on a photo shoot. When I started doing make-up in the 1990s, there wasn't really a make-up scene as such. It was all about nude and put them on, and I turned into this old woman. I have a photo somewhere. My girlfriend and I would turn into little old ladies, and we'd walk around our neighbourhood dressed like this. But then I discovered that while all my girlfriends were turning themselves into ballerinas and princesses, I was more interested in turning into monsters or witches – ugly things.

PP: I used to play in the cellar at my grandmother's place, but I would always dress up my brother and my cousins – never myself. I kind of choreographed and styled them. I think that basements and cellars kind of form people.

CS: Yes, because that's where all the castaway clothes that nobody has worn in years are stored. I didn't know I was going to do anything with this. I knew I was good at art school, but then I got so





bored with just painting. I soon realised that once I'd learnt how to use a camera, it was much more interesting and quicker to come up with an idea and use the camera to capture it, rather than taking ages to paint.

PP: I was surprised to learn that you do everything yourself, on your own. All the props… everything. Do you have to try everything out a few times?

CS: Yes. But now that everything is digital it is so much easier for me. In the early days it was a several-day process. I'd shoot using contact-sheet Polaroids, so you couldn't really tell the focus or colour. I'd shoot something, have to take off all my make-up, then take the films to the lab and wait for three hours. I'd come back with the contacts and then realise I had to re-shoot because it was out of focus or something. Sometimes it would be wrong, and after six or seven attempts I would just give up and move on to something else. Now that it's all digital I can see right away on the computer if something's working or not and make tweaks and changes.

PP: Could you talk me through the process of where an initial idea comes from and how that gets physically transformed into a picture?

CS: To give you an idea of the process: for one of my last series – which were 'society portraits'[2], they look like portraits of matronly women – I would think about the character based on maybe a dress or a wig or the combination of the two. I'd put the dress on and then maybe go through my wigs and see what worked. Once I felt that a character was starting to take shape in my head, I'd shoot the portraits in front of a green screen and then think about incorporating the backgrounds.

Your own work, Peter, seems not such a solo process. You work in a very collaborative way, but is there anything that you work on completely by yourself? Do you research on your own?

PP: In August, when everyone else in Paris is on holiday, I do all the prep for the collections on my own – I am doing 2016 already. I am really in my own capsule, and my office is full of all these pieces of fabric. I never throw anything away make-up-wise; since I started, I kept everything because I can use them as a colour, texture or packaging reference.

CS: What are the considerations you have to take into account when you're creating a make-up collection?

PP: When I make a collection – there are four a year: spring, summer, autumn and Christmas – I have to make sure there are enough products that can please a woman or a girl no matter where she lives in the world: girls in Tokyo, women in Sweden, Brazil – all different cultures, different backgrounds, different beauty ideals and different ages. I would like them to find at least two products in a collection that they can use. It is like a puzzle almost, and of course all the while anticipating what might be a trend.

CS: What are the current trends?

PP: Well, to be honest, we're not living in an era of seasonal trends. There are so many different trends happening at any one time that fashion and beauty can no longer be dictated in the ways they were ten or 15 years ago.

CS: Does your make-up collection have to fit in with the clothing collection?

PP: Not really, although I'm lucky to have the chance to create make-up products specifically for the show. For my first haute couture show for Dior, Raf didn't want any big statement make-up; he wanted something that looked like nothing. The venue was mind-blowing, like a big spaceship with mirrored walls. There were holes in the wall every 15cm, and out of every hole was an eight-metre high living orchid, and the light was really intense. So I proposed what you call an applied eyeliner that was mirrored like the wall. I cut some shapes from this special paper; it didn't look like anything special, but once it caught the light, it was amazing. The great thing is that because of my role now, I can actually put these into production – in the next few months they are going to be sold.

'With a make-up collection, I have to make sure that there are enough products to please a woman or girl no matter where she lives in the world.'

CS: So it's not like an eyeliner pencil?

PP: No they're glued on, application, like fake lashes. Not every show I can do something like that but this time I could. So that is a fun thing. The show was on the Monday, so we had the weekend to cut out our 62 pairs of 'eyeliners in mirrors' ready for the models.

Cindy, what tends to come first in your work? Is it a material or a wig that influences the subject matter, or do you choose a subject and then look for components to bring it to life?

CS: It's a combination of all that, because sometimes the whole theme for a series will be the first thing that really comes into mind, like the 'clowns'[3] for example. Actually, that came to me

as an idea based on something I had bought in a flea market; someone had attached big fluffy pom-poms to a really old pair of pyjamas to turn it into a clown costume. They'd even made a pointy hat that had a pom-pom matching the pyjamas. So I started thinking about clowns and then got the props. Sometimes though, it is like you say, just a wig that inspires a character.

PP: Do you do research at flea markets?

CS: Yes, but I love going to flea markets anyway, so it's half work half fun. With something like the 'society portraits', I did a lot of research online looking at old paintings and bad society pictures.

PP: What was the starting point for that series?

CS: That series was inspired by a woman called Brenda Dickson[4], this kind of 1980s has-been soap opera star. I'd never heard of her, but she created this video that is on her website which is just the funniest thing in the world. It's from around 1985: it starts out in this huge living room that is her apartment, just showing off how glamorous her life is; she comes out in this big shoulder-padded dress and some crazy hat saying, 'Well hello, this is Brenda Dickson, if you wanna be like me then just watch this video tape and follow my make-up and style guide.' She was so backwards with the make-up – you'd get such a kick out of watching it, Peter – she would say things like, 'So, for blush you can do either orange or pink…'[*Laughs*] it was just hilarious… And in the background is this *huge* portrait of her; I was just astounded by the ego of the woman! That was when I decided I wanted to make these kind of portraits.

Peter, you said you arrived at a time when make-up was all about stripping away to something pure and full of real emotions, while Cindy's work is very much about layering and creating masks that express these sort of cracked and faulted characters.

PP: I see Cindy's use of make-up as a confrontation. In the 'real world', the things she explores are exactly those things that most people try to cover up – and that is the strength of it, from my point of view.

CS: I don't know if you wear make-up yourself, but as a woman I do, for example, when I go out at night. So I have this whole other relationship with make-up that is completely different to how I use it professionally. Sometimes I want to put make-up on to make a character look like they are different from me, but as if they are not wearing make-up. And then there's something like the clowns: that was really hard, because on one level I was learning about clown make-up, but then I was also trying to look like a different person *underneath* that clown make-up. It was a real challenge.

PP: I love clowns, they're so intriguing. They're very scary, but at the same time they are like a magnet that draws you in. I love clown make-up too, because it is almost like Lucille Ball or Joan Crawford; if you look at those particular types of stars, it's all about the big red mouth, the pale skin, the red hair.

Do you see those bold colours still used much these days?

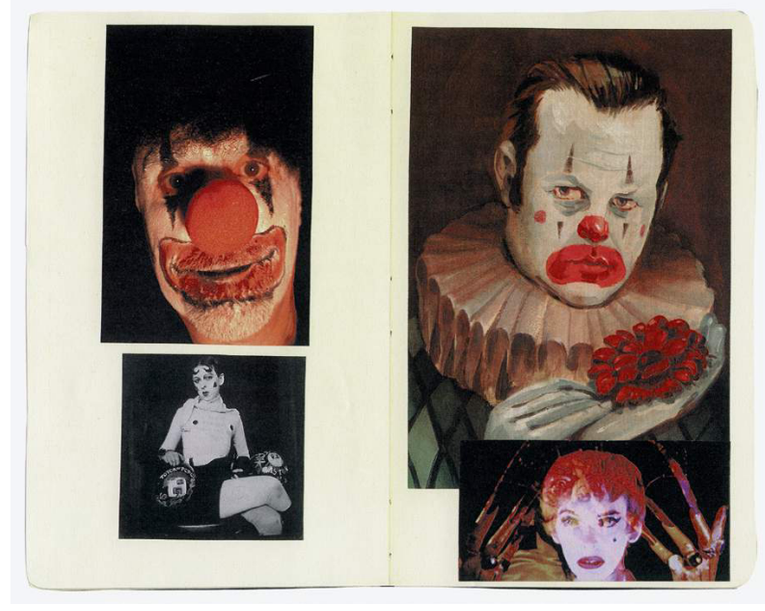
PP: There is a lady who always sits alone in the Café de Flore in Paris who only ever wears full purple. She's a real character, and when she was young she probably looked like Brigitte Bardot. But the first thing you think is, 'Oh my God, that poor sad woman.' And then you think, 'Actually, wow, she is pretty incredible.' She has full make-up – always lavender and purple shades – and I can totally imagine her apartment, like a boudoir full of feathers and things. I don't know if she is sad or happy, but as long as she feels good and if she thinks she needs that, I think she can do whatever she wants. At least she is playing, maybe hiding something, maybe covering something up, maybe nostalgic for something, maybe she used to be very beautiful.

CS: Maybe she put her make-up on like that 40 years ago, and it's just never changed.

PP: Make-up is a very interesting and intriguing concept when you consider its range of uses can go from becoming a scary clown through to classic *mise-en-beauté*, as you say in France, which really means to make yourself pretty, to put forward your best face. It is a very complex issue in our society. But then you have other societies where make-up is tribal or for battles, or religious make-up… painting yourself and painting faces is a big, big universe.

One thing I wanted to discuss is your relationship with the past. Cindy, your work refers to vast canons of cinematic references in the *Untitled Film Stills*[5] and to modern and old masters, while Peter you work with Dior, a brand with a huge heritage. How do you both play with or subvert these past codes and genres to create something new?

'In the "real world", the things Cindy explores and creates are exactly those things that most peopple try to cover up – and that is the strength of it.'



PP: It's obviously interesting to work with a house with a DNA and with a heritage. I don't want to just cling onto the past but it is interesting; I am discovering that Christian Dior himself loved to disguise himself and dress up. He loved to organise costume balls: there is this one costume where he had a big lion cape, and I think the headpiece was made for him by Pierre Cardin. There is a big tradition in Paris haute couture called the *Catherinette*: a yearly celebration for the 25-year-old girls who work in haute couture and who are still single.
CS: But that's different from the debutante ball?
PP: Yes, it is only for the embroiderers and seamstresses. They have to wear a hat that is made especially by them or for them in green and yellow – it's an official thing and all the fashion houses still do it. There is a big ball at the end of the day and they have to go to the *hôtel de ville*, to meet the mayor. And there is always a *fête déguisée* – a fancy dress party. There are pictures of Christian Dior in his days of the *Catherinettes* which are amazing. If you do research into the heritage of a house, you bump into all kinds of interesting elements. Christian Dior was at the helm of his house for only ten years before he died. He started in 1947 and then died of a heart attack ten years later.
CS: Did someone take over right away?
PP: Yes, it was Yves Saint Laurent for a few seasons.

Cindy, in your *Untitled Film Stills*, you reference the 1950s, and obviously Dior is there because you are referencing the 'New Look'. But how aware were you of fashion – as opposed to costume – when you were working in the early days?
CS: Early on, I don't think I was that aware of it, other than knowing iconic Avedon photos of Dovima in Dior and things like that. I had heard of the 'New Look' from watching movies like *Funny Face*, but I didn't know any history of, say, Dior or Chanel. Also back when I was working on that series – it was up until the 1990s – I think the general public didn't know or care that much about labels. Things that we now take for granted like Prada or Gucci or Chanel or Dior being everywhere, it just wasn't as present back then.
PP: I think those brands represented a certain elite; today it is more democratic in a way.
CS: And copied.

Do you think cosmetics have democratised those labels in a way?
CS: Yes, I do.
PP: People always say that about cosmetics: lipstick is the first step for any women to buy into a luxury brand. I don't know if that democratises the luxury houses, but you can get a little foot in. Just going back to your question about old film references: When I was a kid I loved to watch black-and-white movies, which provided a really amazing lesson in light. Marlene Dietrich and Ava Gardener looked stunning, and it was all about the light more than the make-up. And when I look at your early work Cindy, I see how you shade and sculpt your face, and I think that is how you can make someone look very retro in a way; the way you shade and sculpt the face, by painting light or shadows…
CS: …directly onto the face.
PP: Exactly. I see make-up in two stages: the black and white is like the underdressing of the face – it is the basics, the negligée almost – it's about the skin and the shading and lighting, the features and the way the face moves. Once you start moving or talking, it can change so much. And then I start dressing the face with colour. Then you can do anything: an era, a statement, gothic, punk, romantic, the accessorising of the face. That is why I love film. I learnt so much about light from those old movies.

Cindy, you are also drawn to more radical aesthetics, such as horror movies[6], which are basically the antithesis of the beauty that Peter engages with at Dior, and more generally in fashion photography. How does horror seduce you, and how do you use the genre of horror in your art?
CS: Well, I am a big fan of horror movies, not just because I like to be scared but because I find that whole genre funny too; it's very entertaining. I suppose a lot of that comes from knowing it is all artificial, so you feel safe in realising that.
PP: Do you find beauty in horror?
CS: Not so much real beauty, but I just find that I am not interested in capturing conventional beauty because enough other people do that – I would rather explore things that are harder to look at. And then I try to create it so that this horror world becomes like a beautiful picture. I mean, the ideal scenario is that you see something from faraway on the wall, and it looks beautiful and very seductive; but as you go

'You see something faraway, and it looks beautiful and very seductive; but as you go closer you realise it's actually bugs crawling over a corpse.'

closer to see what it is, you realise that it's actually bugs crawling over a corpse. To me, that is funny: it's like a surprise, but also disgusting. But it's fake disgusting: I don't want it to look so realistic that it confuses people into thinking that I'm documenting rotting corpses because, you know, there is enough of that on the internet and in the news we're exposed to.

So artifice is a very important element in your work.

CS: Yes, because I want people to know that these are fake bugs, and it is a fake ass or fake tits or fake blood. So I guess in some horror movies it is very realistic, but it's entertainment – but that's not to say I am trying to 'entertain' people with my work.

PP: But that artifice is also very much the culture of our era. I love the fact you use those fake asses and tits and those prosthetics – it is very *now*. Again, it is a confrontation. I was wondering: when you did your 'society pictures', did you get any reactions from society women?

CS: I had some cases: astute and aware women who would look at that show and then congratulate me and say, 'I can see myself up there.' But they weren't angry, saying, 'How dare you!' Then again, there were also a lot of women who totally did not see that connection. But so many people told me that they really knew those particular women. Someone said that the mayor of Rome looks like one of those characters!

Cindy, there's this ubiquity now regarding plastic surgery and the surgical interventions on the street that you have exploited in your work. And Peter, you're obviously working in an entirely different category of appearance enhancement, but I was interested to know how you both feel about plastic surgery?

PP: Plastic surgery has become almost as accepted and commonplace as an eye shadow or a lipstick. Or tattoos. In fact, everything to do with transforming the state of your body is very accepted now, which I think is a great thing. It is a revolution. It is not always very well done or thought out. But the possibilities are there, and it is a free world, and everyone has the freedom to do what they like.

CS: Somebody told me about a TV show I have to look up called *Botched* – it's about all these botched plastic surgeries and it sounds so interesting. There was someone on it who is trying to transform himself to look like Justin Bieber…

PP: When you look back in history, similar things have always happened, like when corsets became so tight that women died.

CS: Or foot-binding[7] in Asia. And the hair things that people would do: the removal of all eyelashes and brows… all in the name of beauty! What about make-up for men?

PP: There's a lot more of it than you first imagine.

CS: But it is still not considered as acceptable?

PP: It is like the skirt for men. In a way, it has been tried over and over again, but just the term 'make-up for men' is not so good; it needs to be referred to more like grooming. I mean, it is all marketing anyway. There are a few brands doing really good grooming for men: I know Gaultier did something, but it often becomes very 'tata', a bit gay. They were great products but for a very effeminate male.

CS: So it is being geared towards a certain audience… When did Dior start creating make-up?

PP: Oh, very early on. When Christian Dior did his first shows he associated a perfume with his collections. He was very much inspired by flowers. So there was perfume already; and then I think after one or two collections he started bringing out a lipstick and then nail polishes. It was step by step. I don't know when they started doing a full collection; I think it was the late 1960s when they had proper products. They started working with Serge Lutens[8], and he did some really amazing Dior campaigns – total transformations.

Just looking at the walls here in your studio Cindy, with all these cosmetics advertising pages. Have you used this imagery as a source of inspiration in your own works? Like the poses or gestures, for example.

CS: I was really influenced in the late 1970s and early 1980s by those exotic French magazines, things like *L'Officiel*. I saved some of the magazines and ripped out pages. Some of them were close-ups of women's faces, so I am assuming it was for their specific look. I was mainly curious about those images where it's *about* the use of the make-up, as opposed to just how the make-up is used, like pictures of nail polish…

'When you put make-up on just to go out, is there a moment when you have to stop so you don't turn yourself into a Cindy Sherman character?'

When you make yourself up for your own portraits, do you use both commercial and theatrical make-up?
CS: Oh, yes.
PP: It's amazing to hear that you do all your make-up yourself. Have you felt that over the years you have become very proficient as a make-up artist?
CS: No. I mean if you look up close… When I work with someone they tend to be much fussier about getting perfect make-up, especially with high-definition pictures. But, a lot of my stuff is also about letting the artifice show, seeing the imperfections. I like it to look heavy, because if I go too natural then it just looks like my own skin tone.
PP: Do you keep all your old make-up?
CS: I have some eye shadows that are probably 30 years old, and I still might even use them for work. But most of it I just try to throw out because now I know it's not good to have mascara that's more than a year old. But there are some things I keep for sentimental reasons; I have a kohl pencil from the early 1980s.

Cindy, your first collaboration with a brand was with Comme des Garçons[9]. When those images were communicated to the fashion world, I think it was the first time they had seen make-up used in that way in a fashion context. Peter, I'm sure that you experienced those images in a particular way.
PP: I was very surprised when I saw them. I think that even Comme des Garçons were surprised by those images, weren't they?
CS: I think so; I think they liked them.
PP: You really didn't expect to see that in a fashion context, but then it was like, 'Ah, Comme des Garçons, they've done it again.'
PP: You've also collaborated with Balenciaga[10], and Chanel.[11] How do you deal with things that are not anonymous objets trouvés? Is it constricting?
CS: Yes, it shocked me how constricting it was. The Balenciaga people were very helpful, but some of those jackets and things were so tight on me. I work alone, and I remember trying one jacket on that made my shoulders really hunched and then I couldn't move my arms. The only way I could get it off was by sitting on the sleeve and yanking my shoulder out, because it was like a straitjacket.

That must have been interesting in itself, as the projection of a certain kind of identity you were trying to explore, that of a fashion brand, and how that only literally fits a certain type of body shape.
CS: With Chanel, they had given me a selection of 50 or 60 different looks over the course of time. Knowing things were going to be tiny, I looked for outfits that were relatively loose, like a chiffon dress, but when I got it and tried it on, the chiffon was the exterior part, and there was an interior part, a corset kind of thing and then a beaded thing on top which was so heavy. I could get it on, but I couldn't zip it up. I couldn't even hook the top of it because the arm and the beaded part were so tight. In the photograph I'm standing there looking really pissed off because I can hardly move without the dress falling off my shoulder. So it really informed the pictures: I look really pissed off and angry, just stood cursing Karl Lagerfeld!
PP: How about the make-up in relation to all the different Chanel clothes?
CS: I made it really simple on myself because I was so afraid of holding onto any of those precious pieces for any length of time. I didn't actually wear any make-up; I did all the faces digitally, just slightly altering the eyes or making them a little smaller, or tilting them at an angle or elongating the nose – really subtle things. Or just shading the face to make my face look more haggard, or in one case to make me look really old. That was the first time I had ever done digital make-up.

Is this something you both find challenging, the fact that there is so much post-production, particularly in corporate advertising imagery?
PP: I really try to fight all that because I think it totally deforms the image and the skin texture. It is a challenge because, for example, with a mascara ad in the UK at the moment, if you digitally enhance the lashes then you have to state that on the advertisement. The challenge is to not use any fake lashes and to do the thing yourself. I worked on the print advertising campaign for Dior, and there is no faking. It is all real: layers and layers and curling and the lashes were separated, and it looks great. And this was a big challenge. I feel that now the business is all about smoothing everything out, not just make-up but fashion too. Every wrinkle or line has to go.

Cindy, is that an area you might explore more in a future series, the possibility of digital distortion, rather than doing it with prosthetics?
CS: I probably will. Some of the things I have taped up on my studio wall, like the beauty ads, are to make me think about quite how fake they look, and how I would like to explore that in my work. I mean, I still want it to look obvious; I'd probably do it like a statement of that kind of photoshopping in itself.
PP: Looking around your studio, you have so many different outfits and accessories. Are you constantly on the look out for clothes?
CS: No, a lot of the stuff you can see right now I bought when I was in Morocco, thinking I was going to do a Moroccan project, and then some of them, like an Ungaro dress, are left over from the 'society portraits'.
PP: Do you find these in thrift shops?
CS: There's a place uptown where rich old ladies donate their stuff – that's why the Ungaro dress was there.
PP: You seem to have lots of vintage pictures of Mexican wrestlers on your walls right now. Is this something you are interested in, moving into more masculine representations?
CS: Not wrestlers, but I was thinking about doing a series of men. But that would be complicated: I will probably have to have wigs made and then think about the male characters I might want to portray. When I was doing the *Untitled Film Stills*, I tried to introduce some men but they just looked like silly clichés; I couldn't figure out any poignancy or any emotional depth. That's why with female characters I can relate to what is disturbing them or whatever.
PP: That is where men and make-up can so easily look fake, unless it is clowns or tribal warriors – when it becomes a disguise. But if you try make-up for men, whether it's natural or a fake moustache, it always ends up looking odd.
CS: More like a mask.
PP: Like trying too hard… The last question I had for you: When you go out and you put on make-up, is there is a moment when you have to stop applying it so you don't turn yourself into a Cindy Sherman character?
CS: [*Laughs*] Yes, and it's tricky getting older. With a lot of make-up, under certain light it can look really bad. It's always a question of striking that interesting balance between being me and becoming one of my characters.

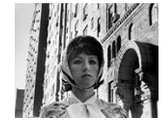
'Some of the things I have taped up on my studio wall, like the beauty ads, are to make me think about quite how fake they look.'

1. The Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp has a distinguished history as an internationally acclaimed insitute. It became world leading in the early 1980s with the success of 'The Antwerp Six', six graduates of the fashion department who formed a collective to present their work: Dirk Bikkembergs, Walter Van Beirendonck, Marina Yee, Dries Van Noten, Dirk Van Saene and Ann Demeulemeester had a huge impact on the contemporary fashion scene.

2. In the 'society portraits' series from 2008, Cindy Sherman's characters are set against opulent backgrounds and framed in ornate frames, setting off their vulnerability and tragedy.

3. In the 'clowns' series from 2003 to 2004 Sherman's use of digital photography enabled her to innovate and to create chromatically garish backdrops. She used a green-screen background and inserted day-glo, spin-art backdrops.

4. Brenda Dickson is an American actress who was the original actress playing Jill Foster Abbott on the soap opera *The Young and the Restless*.



5. *Untitled Film Stills,* 1977–1980 is the series with which Cindy Sherman achieved international recognition. *Untitled Film Stills* are 69 black-and-white fictional portraits inspired by movies and girlie magazines. She purposely developed the film in hotter-than-normal chemicals to make them look cracked and grainy, like promotional giveaways. They are now considered landmarks of late-20th-century art. In 1995, useum of Modern Art in New York purchased a set for a reported US$1 million. Madonna sponsored a show of Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* at the MoMA in 1997.

6. Three of Cindy Sherman's favourite horror movies are *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* and the original *Funny Games*.

7. Foot-binding is custom of applying painfully tight binding to the feet of young girls to prevent further growth. It is believed to have begun during the Song Dynasty in 10th-century China. Bound feet were seen as a status symbol for wealthy women who did not need to work, although eventually the practice became widespread. Foot binding was banned in 1911.

8. Serge Lutens is a French photographer, filmmaker, hair stylist, perfume art-director and fashion designer. For our interview, turn to page 250.

9. In 1994, Cindy Sherman produced the 'postcard' series for Comme des Garçons's Autumn/Winter 1994-1995 collections in collaboration with Rei Kawakubo. They were popularly agreed to have broken all the rules of fashion photography.

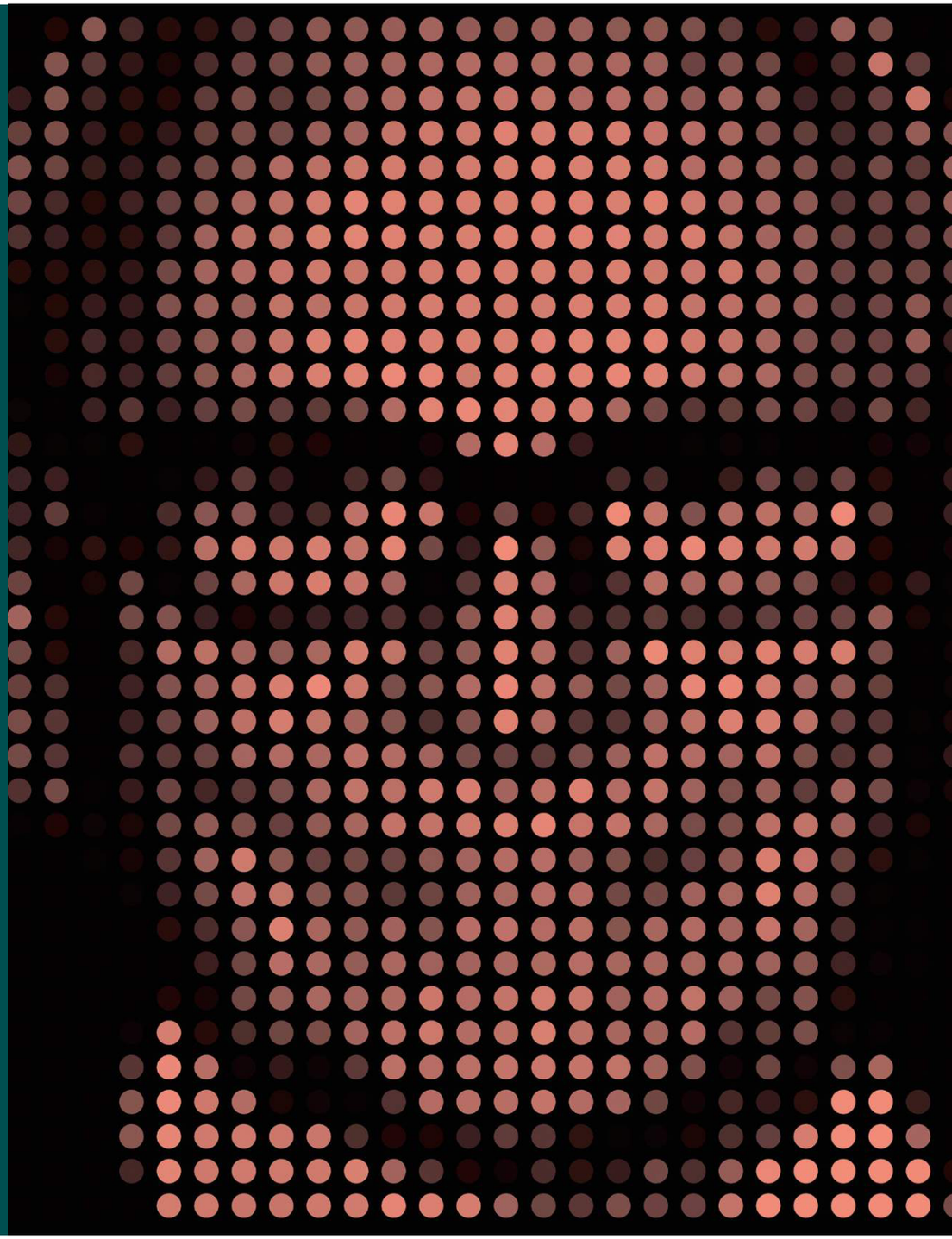
10. For Balenciaga, Sherman created the series *Cindy Sherman: Untitled (Balenciaga)* in 2008; they were first shown to the public in 2010 when Nicolas Ghesquière hosted a party at the brand's flagship store in New York City.

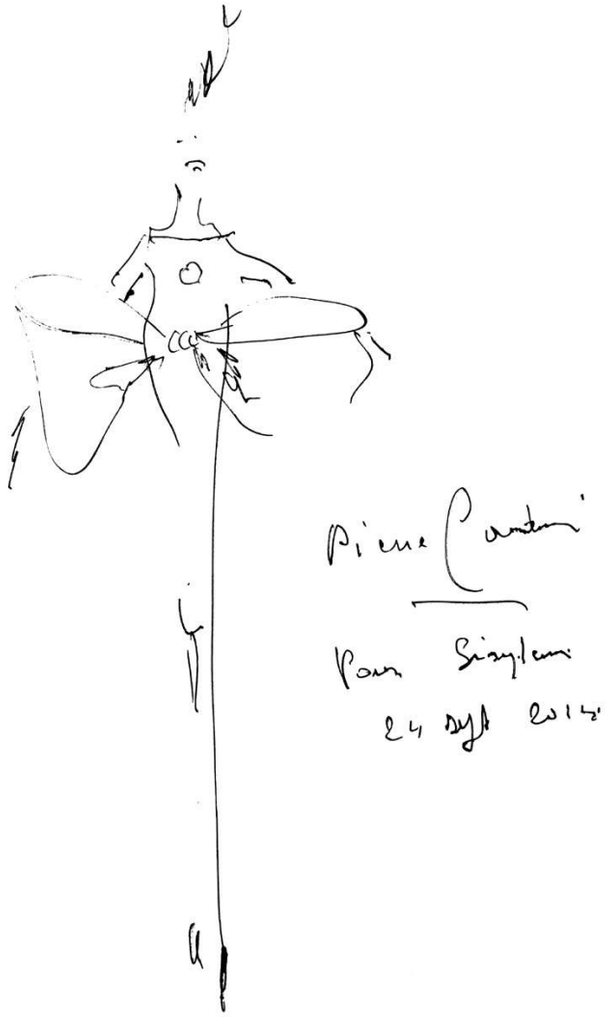
11. Sherman's 'Chanel' series consisted of large-scale works depicting enigmatic female figures standing in striking landscapes and wearing vivid Chanel costumes. The dramatic settings were all photographed by Sherman and then manipulated in Photoshop to achieve a painterly effect. Sherman's self-portraits are based on a story she did for *POP* magazine.

‘Look at the modernism of it, even now.’

Pierre Cardin gets older. His clothes stay the same age.

By Hans Ulrich Obrist
Photographs by Zoë Ghertner
Styling by Camille Bidault-Waddington





Pierre Cardin, the 92-year-old French visionary and father of ready-to-wear, entered the world of haute couture under his own name in 1950, creating clothes so cutting-edge that they were described as belonging to 'tomorrow's world'. His list of celebrity clients included Eva Péron and Rita Hayworth. In 1959, his decision to produce a licensed prêt-à-porter collection, a defining moment in fashion history, may have shocked the establishment but it took his futuristic designs into boutiques across the world, forging him a reputation as the progenitor of branding. Influenced by his love of architecture, abstract geometric forms and technical fabrics, Cardin designed garments for a world that did not yet exist, and which remain as relevant and contemporary now, as they were avant-garde then.

Let's talk about your other Palais, the Palais Bulles. How did that project come about?
I knew Antti Lovag[2] because he was my neighbour in the south of France. He'd made a small bubble construction [for Pierre Bernard], which I found interesting, so we thought we'd work together in the region, and ultimately design Palais Bulles all around the world. But then Bernard died, so the project never went further than the original Palais Bulles that I financed and eventually purchased. I bought it for a few million, a lot of money at the time.

So you were also like Antti Lovag's patron in a way.
I never trusted banks, I was my own banker. And people forget, I actually made half of the Palais Bulles myself. Antti Lovag did half, and I did the other half.

Would you say the Palais Bulles is also a refuge for you, a place to hide away?
Yes, a monastery. With monastery corridors, but with light.

Do you ever work there?
No, I go there to relax. I used to do a lot of work there but that's over.

And you also have the Marquis de Sade's château?
Yes, I have the Château de Lacoste[3].
I got it by magic. It was the patron Madame Nora Bouër who sold it to me because I knew her. I have quite a lot of residences in the south of France. I've had four theatres. I've had three boats on the Seine…

What about your relationship with architecture, because you studied architecture too…
I wanted to be an architect. Actually, I wanted to be a designer, a model, a dancer. I was very ambitious. I worked day and night. You have to be ambitious in life, otherwise you don't succeed.

So you always worked a lot.
I've always worked a lot and I've always been passionate about research. I've always been to museums and archaeological sites. I've always drawn from the past: not to copy what's gone before, but to know what *not* to do in the future.

Who were the architects that inspired you to want to become an architect yourself?
Niemeyer… with Brasilia.

'I've always drawn inspiration from the past: not because I want to copy what's gone before, but to know what not to do in the future.'

Hans Ulrich Obrist: So to start with I was curious to know what you are working on at the moment?
Pierre Cardin: I'm trying to find funding for my Palais Lumière[1] in Venice, which will effectively be the work of my life. We have the location; all that is missing is the money – the all-essential money. We've already been working for four years on the project.

Have you always felt Venetian?
I don't feel Venetian, I *am* Venetian. I am Italian by birth, French by naturalisation.

Are you designing the Palais Lumière in partnership with an architect? Or by yourself?
With an architect, but I can't say who it is at this stage.

And were you touched by the work of Le Corbusier?
I'm not a fan of Le Corbusier. I don't like the housing in Marseille [the Unité d'Habitation[4]].

In 1945, you went to see a medium who predicted a great future for you, but at the time you wanted to become an actor.
I was working at the French Red Cross as an administrator, and as the end of the war arrived I returned to Paris to work there again. I wanted to become an actor and I had the good fortune to meet this medium. And then I met other personalities who introduced me to Jean Cocteau. I was employed by him and I did the costumes for *La Belle et la Bête*. That was the first money I earned, and I said to myself that by doing the costumes that would be my entrée into

theatre or cinema. That was how I started in couture, via the theatre.

How was Jean Cocteau?
He was a real gentleman: he had a great education and interior *noblesse*. And, above all, a great talent.

So you met and worked with Cocteau, and then later you met Dior. What did you learn from him?
Elegance. I remember the first day I started at Dior. There wasn't even an iron, so I was the one who brought one to the studio. I started doing the first collection – the 'New Look' with Marguerite Carré, the head of the ateliers. This was 1946. So it started with Dior: If I hadn't been with Christian Dior, I can only imagine what would I have become – a civil servant?

No, not Balenciaga. I never worked with him, but he was very inspiring. I found him to be the most elegant and certainly the most personal of the couturiers.

Where does this idea of the future that is so present in your work come from?
There was Courrèges, Paco Rabanne and I. We did it all at the same time, within three months. Look at the modernism of it even now – it was constructing the future.

What do you regard as your main epiphany in terms of couture?
What influenced me a lot was seeing how they dressed on the moon, in 1966, 1967. That inspired me enormously. I wanted to see women in dresses that were easy to walk in; it was the practical side that interested me.

you haven't been into space yourself, you have worn the suit…
I couldn't have gone at the time, but now I think there are space expeditions, but I am too old now! [*Laughs*] I visited NASA in the past, and I was the first civilian to put on the spacesuit worn by Buzz Aldrin.

Something that has always interested me too is your relationship between art and commerce.
It surprises people, but I love commerce: I love selling, I love buying. I bought this building, it is all mine. It's rare. I'm not just a designer or a businessman. I'm an academic; I'm an ambassador; I'm a designer; I'm a businessman; I'm a theatre director; I'm a director; I'm a producer – no one else in the world has all those titles.

'Space clothing had to be practical: you had to be able to climb a ladder in a spaceship, unencumbered by frills, lace and other fancy things from the past.'

So Dior freed you in a way.
Yes, absolutely.

You've said in interviews that right from the start you wanted to be separate from Dior; you wanted to do something very different with couture – and your ideas were based on circular forms. I'm very interested in this idea of the circle because obviously the world is round.
Yes, the circle has no end. With the square you reach the end, not with the circle. I said one day I will conquer the world: I've since been to New Zealand, Alaska, the top of Canada, the very bottom of Argentina, San Francisco and the islands obviously.

So you worked with Cocteau and Dior – what about Balenciaga?

So it was based on the idea of how we might live on another planet?
At the time, it was the moon. It had to be practical: you had to be able to climb a ladder in a spaceship, unencumbered by frills, lace and other fancy things from the past.

Have you always been fascinated by technology? Were you one of the first to use computers, for example?
The world of computers fascinates me very much, but it's not of my generation. It came after me. I don't work on a computer, I still do everything by hand. I do a hundred or so sketches a day. Everything by hand. It is personal, it's manual.

Could you talk a little more about your experiences of space travel? Although

These days the idea of a 'brand' is totally expected, but very early on you set up international licences for your brand. What triggered this vision?
I was never interested in only designing for exclusive or rich people. I wanted to be popular – to be a designer *and* popular – to serve the people, with creativity.

Have you produced films?
Yes, I produced the film, *Joanna Francesa* starring Jeanne Moreau.

You've launched a lot of people's careers.
I love launching people's careers. Jeanne Moreau, Gérard Depardieu…

Of all these great personalities that you met, who was the one who left the greatest impression?

Mother Teresa and Mahatma Gandhi.

What struck you about them?
Their presence, their convincing magnetism just through their gaze.

You're on great form. What is your secret?
I don't know, I'm pretty old. I need to relax, I had a pacemaker fitted. You need to be happy to live and happy to work. I'm not a normal couturier like the others.

That is what is so fascinating. And what is the recipe to designing clothes 40 years ago that look like they were created today?
I had a vision.

They haven't aged at all. The colours are important: do you have a favourite colour?
Green.

Why?
Blue is the sea, and green is the earth.

Other than the Palais Lumière, have you any other unrealised projects?
No, I've done everything. Already back then, 40 years ago, I'd already done everything in fashion. Isn't that amazing, how modern it still looks? No one dared to do that, no one. It was provocative.

And what would your advice be to a young couturier in 2014?
To know me, but not copy me.

1. The Palais Lumière is a proposed skyscraper by Pierre Cardin, to be constructed in Venice. The 60-storey, three-finned Palais Lumière skyscraper would, at 245 metres high, be more than twice the height of the bell tower of St Mark's Basilica. Public and government opposition has currently forced Cardin to put his plans for the futuristic project on hold.

2. Architect Antti Lovag was born in Hungary in 1920. He studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris and started developing his interest in organic architecture in the 1960s. He started building his first bubble house in 1969. In 1971, he began construction on the Bernard House, a bubble house in Port-La-Galley for Pierre Bernard. From 1975-1989, he built the Palais Bulles in Théoule-sur-Mer, bought in 1992 by Pierre Cardin.

3. The Château de Lacoste, lying in the heart of the Luberon valley, was owned by the de Sade family since 1716, the original dated back to the 11th century. But in the early 1790s during the French Revolution, it was torn down by a mob. Villagers looted stones, and the castle was abandoned for 150 years. In 1952, a local teacher began a restoration effort that made a central part of the castle habitable again. Then in 2001, Pierre Cardin bought the château.

4. The *Unité d'Habitation* is the most influential work of the Swiss-French architect, Le Corbusier, who described the project as 'the first manifestation of an environment suited to modern life'. A modernist residential design principle conceived to alleviate the severe post-War housing shortage, the best known of these developments is located in Marseille and is also referred to as the *Cité Radieuse*.

Pour être un Créateur
il faut
connaître mais ne pas
copier

Pierre Cardin

Brown felt balaclava, 1996
Teal Shetland-wool coat, 1980
Brown lycra slip

Red crêpe-de-laine suit, 1996
Pink-rimmed goggles with yellow lenses, 1970

Men's leather and hammered-metal necklace, 1970
Black moulded-vinyl skirt, 1968
Brown lycra slip

Off-white straw bowler hat, 1980
Black crêpe-de-laine and silver leather dress, 1969
Brown lycra slip

Black moleskin 'helmet' hat, 1968
Violet wool-jersey tunic, 1971
Black patent-leather belt

Black wool-jersey polo neck
Salmon wool-jersey tunic with fringes, 1971
Lilac wool-jersey wheel trousers, 1969
Black-patent leather Peter Pan boots

Brown wool-broadcloath coat, 1987
Peacock blue wool-jersey dress and braces, 1971
Brown lycra slip

Ivory wool mini-skirt in strips, 1967
Brown and beige flecked wool-jersey slip
Top boot edged in steel, 1969

Brown deconstructed straw hat, 1987
Men's 'Cosmocorps' wool-tweed zip jacket, 1968
Brown flecked wool-jersey slip

Steel-blue silk-taffeta skirt, 1989
Red leather and metal ring handbag, 2012
Brown flecked wool-jersey slip

Navy-blue and ivory reversible jacket with circular armholes, 1984
Black vinyl trousers

Silk-taffeta belt, 1977
Patent-leather Peter Pan boots

Olive faux ostrich-leather boots, 1989

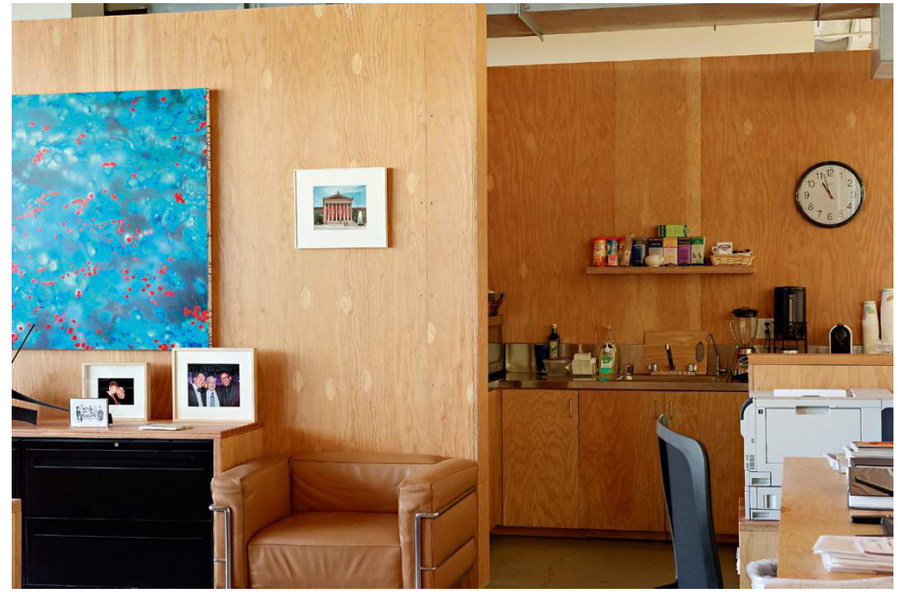
Models: Clarence c/o Silent Models & Emma Waldo c/o Elite Paris. Hair: Christoph Hasenbein c/o Jedroot. Make-up: Stephanie Kunz c/o Calliste.
Manicure: Laura Forget c/o Artist Paris. Photography Assistance: Corentin Thevenet & Alexandre Salle de Chou. Styling Assistance: Marie Déhé & Marion Jolivet.
Production: Guillaume Hery at Total Management. Special thanks to Renée Taponier & Musée Pierre Cardin.

Brown crêpe-de-laine 'Renée' dress with silver leather disks, 1969
Black felt 'helmet hat', 1968
Brown lycra slip

‘It’s a nice place to be when you’re creating stuff.’

Relaxing at work with Frank Gehry.

By Jo-Ann Furniss
Photographs by Robert Polidori



'A handbag?!' Lady Bracknell's immortal utterance might perhaps be echoed in architecture's ivory towers when some of the field's leading proponents find out what Frank Gehry has been up to of late. He is arguably the greatest architect at work today – *Vanity Fair* has called him 'the most important architect of our age' – and yet, in the flesh, he is free of any sort of pretentions and pomposity. He is a delight to be around. Frank Gehry gleefully embraces a seriously playful attitude and ethos in his life and work – in the vast Gehry Partners studio, cluttered with large scale models that can be tinkered with and moulded by hand like three-dimensional sketches, you imagine this is the terrain of a mad hobbyist. Yet this is the terrain of the great Frank Gehry who, nonetheless, still voiced himself on *The Simpsons*. It is in this state of mind, of serious playfulness, that the architect has been concocting something in tandem with his Parisian magnum opus in the Bois de Boulogne – that's the Fondation Louis Vuitton in case you didn't know – another project also for LV and in celebration of the famous monogram. It is something entirely opposite in scale and stature to the former project, doll-like in its proportions, yet strangely 'fuck you' in its lack of machismo and might. It is also top secret at the time this conversation takes place, in early May 2014 in Los Angeles. It is indeed a handbag. And it is one that could not have been designed by anybody other than Frank Gehry.

'Tip the world on its side and everything loose will land in Los Angeles,' said that other famous Frank of architecture, Frank Lloyd Wright. And this is where Frank Gehry himself landed. From the Canadian kid who was taught to play and make things from scraps by his grandmother, via the detour of truck driver, to being the pre-eminent architect of our age: in many ways Los Angeles is the place where it all came together. Gehry established his architectural practice in Los Angeles in 1962, but it is with his startling renovations to his residence in Santa Monica, purchased and revived in 1977, that all those loose bits really started to redefine the architectural landscape. Frank Gehry is far from being a 'purist', and Los Angeles is the perfect, non-pure, place for him. It is the place where he met many like-minded individuals in different fields and with their inspiration, started to redefine the boundaries of his own discipline, something that he continues to do today.

In turn, our talk of the handbag has shaken loose its own debris. Curiously opening up a plethora of Frank Gehry's memories, experiences and insights that are both perceptive and funny – this is not exactly an interview for architectural purists, or fashion purists come to that – they range from observations on the Royal Family, including how he annoyed Princess Anne and how his mother thought she was The Queen Mother, to how the rich want to punish themselves through Minimalism. It is a conversation that is ably added to by Gehry's brilliant and engaging right hand, Meaghan Lloyd.

To neatly sum up Frank Gehry's attitude, and to quote his favourite writer, Anthony Trollope, in response to those Lady Bracknell-type naysayers: 'I ain't a bit ashamed of anything.'

Have you worked in fashion before?
Yes, I have. With Rudi Gernreich[1]. He was here and he was a friend – and it was years ago. I decided to make a dress out of… What's it called again – it was plastic, very light – Mylar!

The big *Vogue* model at the time was Jean Shrimpton. I wanted her to fly to New York – where there was a snowstorm, so blizzard cold – where she would put on this Mylar coat that you could see through. It would keep her body heat in but be completely see-through.

Would she have been naked underneath?
That would be one possibility – it would be her choice. It never happened, but we talked about it a lot.

It was at the time when many of the great LA artists were emerging… And you were friends with them…
There is a picture on the steps at the LA County of Art, and all the artists are there. Gernreich is there with – what's her name – Peggy Moffit.

She is in charge of the Gernreich estate. You know they are trying to revive it?
I'd be willing to help them. I don't know what I could do, but still… I loved him. I just thought he was great. I did a conference with Rudi and that was where I showed cardboard furniture. Richard Solomon, who was the backer of Yves Saint Laurent and Vidal Sassoon at the time, showed an interest in it and got it to Bloomingdale's. So that sort of all happened at the same time. Solomon was a high-fashion guy: I was kind of peripheral.

Doing a handbag, what will people say?
You tell me.

A lot of creative fields don't have that willingness to explore… Why did you want to do the project?
Because I love Delphine [Arnault]. It just happened seamlessly. She came to visit. She was in LA and wanted to come to the studio… Then I was asked about the store windows. And what goes in the windows… a handbag. I think I said, 'OK, I'll try it.' That is always my kind of attitude. So I did, and they loved it. I thought 'What the fuck's going on?'

'If you go on organising everything for a logical development of the world, the world doesn't like that. It doesn't give a fuck about working like that.'

'I turned down Avedon. I love his photos, I just didn't want to be in them. The other guy photographed me – what's his name? – Irving Penn.'

Are you always surprised when people actually love what you do?
Especially that! In my work I am usually pushed back if it's new – that's when I know I am doing OK when I get the push back. I feel my own push back – what is this thing? But with the bag it was my son's fiancé Joycey [Joyce Shin], who is a designer with me, and we started playing with these shapes, one of which was this. I thought, well, we'll just put it in as a process thing and see where it goes – but they loved it. Then I didn't want it to just be 'a thing', so I spent time with Louis Vuitton to talk about the refinement of details, the clasp… the whole thing. I have had fun with them, we've been changing and refining the bag up until the last minute.

Then when I saw what all the other designers were doing, I thought, well we're not as important as those guys because we didn't do the bigger things! But then, when I saw them all aligned, I thought ours was kind of our thing, one thing where it wouldn't have worked being bigger – you wouldn't make a suitcase that is lopsided?! With a handbag you can get away with it, if it just sat on a table.

And it also feels sort of rebellious for you to do something that isn't monumental… That is small instead of big.
I think it is a one-off type thing, where you wouldn't do it again. Where you wouldn't do bigger ones or littler ones. It works as one thing and that's it. I like that quality about it.

So you're not tempted to start a handbag range?
No! Ha.

When is the Foundation Louis Vuitton opening?
It's opening October 27th.

Is that a secret too?
I don't have secrets from anybody…

Apart from the handbag!
The Foundation is far less secret. I've never had that secrecy before, they are doing a whole campaign with the bag and that terrifies me…

What scares you about that?
It is territory I have never been in… Handbag publicity!

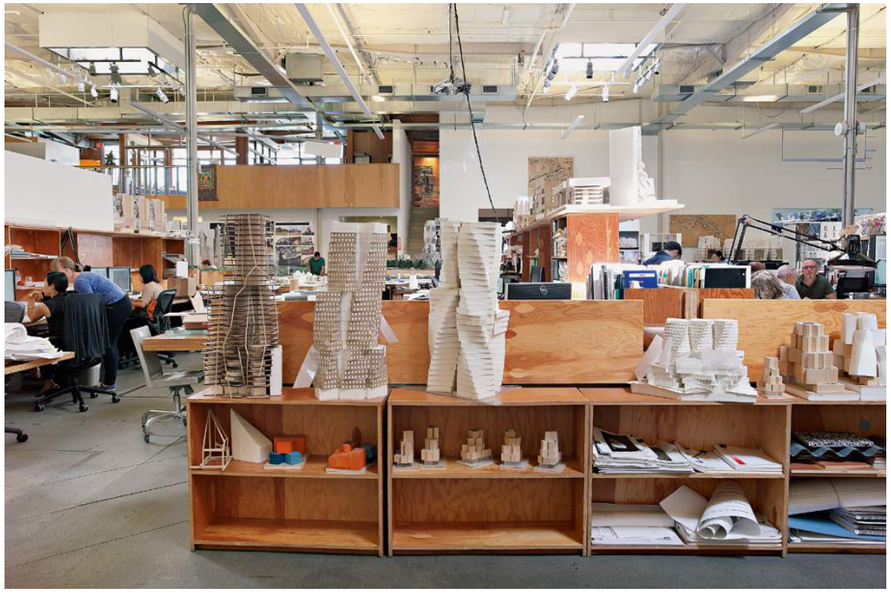
But I was told you wanted to do something with Michelle Williams. And I thought, why Michelle Williams?
I don't even know who Michelle Williams is. All I know is she is the little girl with the red bag in the current advertising campaign. I thought that was so Louis Vuitton – I really responded to her and the bag in the picture. I thought it was one of the best photographic ads I have ever seen. So when they talked about this I asked could they get her to pose with the bag? I have no clue about what I'm thinking or saying or why! Whether she is totally wrong for this sort of wacky bag…

Well, she lives in LA I think…
Well let's get her over here! I'll have the first picture with her and the bag.

Your fear seems to be subsiding about the whole campaign…
You have to realise I once turned down Avedon. I love his photographs – but I just didn't want to be in one of them. Although I did have a photo with the other guy – what's his name again? – Irving Penn.

Anyway, we designed an icon for the building, the LV logo for the building. It is really beautiful. It sort of mimics what we have for the bag, in the embossed interior.

Why the blue leather interior?
I have never really been inside a handbag, so I was trying to think what I would like if I were inside, maybe blue… I just liked that colour in contrast with the brown monogram really. It just all happened intuitively, it was not contrived. I was asked how would I like the interior? So I just started to think about



different colours. The thing about a handbag is that there is all kinds of different junk inside it, so if I had made the interior reflective, there would just be more junk! Those were the kind of things I thought about, to have a reflective interior but you'd just be looking at more stuff. I thought it called attention to the interior – and I wanted to leave that on the outside. The interior is more private, so it could be red or a natural leather colour, but I thought the blue was great with the brown. A darker blue just felt more orderly somehow, for the stuff in the bag, that it would just give it more clarity… I suppose I just have a fantasy of what it would be like to be inside the bag! Ha!

Meaghan Lloyd: Everybody just literally created the bag they wanted for themselves. Whereas Frank created a sculpture he'd like to see on a table.

Would you ever carry the bag?
[*Laughs*]

Would you give the bag to someone? For them to carry…
Oh, yes. I'd give one to Carrie Fisher because she's a good friend. But if you put that in then I'll have to!

I'll tell you who I would really like to see carry the bag, Queen Elizabeth. Because her mother carried a little white bag and my mother thought she was her when she got older and carried a little white bag too. She was Canadian, and we had relatives in England who would talk about going to The Queen's garden party, making her think that this was a special invitation that her relatives alone had received, very exclusive. She got into the fantasy that she was part of this pseudo-British-royalty-bullshit and she carried the white purse. We called her 'The Queen Mother'. And then, as she aged, I bought her a little house near mine. It had a tiny little garden, a beautiful little garden. And she said to me one day, 'Are we planning the garden party?' I said, 'Which garden party?' She said, 'The one we have every year.' I said 'OK, who would you invite?' She said, 'Oh, the usual people.' I said, 'OK mom, we'll carry on with the party.' Two weeks before the party, my mother's gardener called and told me she was asking for trees to be torn down because there was not enough lawn for the event – she was asking for neighbours' trees to be torn down as well. She was really going for the royal garden party. So it went ahead, she wore a beautiful bonnet and sat at the table. A load of friends of mine came that she didn't know – it was like hiring extras, they went along with it but they would not have normally come to my mother's birthday party. So, really, this is my only experience with handbags – it has notoriety, it is a handbag that people all over the world would recognise. So I was thinking about that, could we make it white for her? Yes, we might. LV have done white for Murakami – so my idea is that we make a white one, and I go to Queen Elizabeth and present it to her.

That's who you should have in the campaign!
If Queen Elizabeth heard this story about my mother, and if she knew I was standing on the street in Toronto as she and her sister, as little girls, were going up University Avenue with their mother and father – I was maybe five years old, and she was about three years older and cute – so if she knew that, that I was there. And she knew about my mother's relatives who would go to the garden party, and if she knew my mother carried a white purse and was called 'The Queen Mother' by the family, and if she knew my mother really tried to have a garden party, I think she'd be happy to receive it.

They might turn around and say unfortunately, she can only carry British goods…
And there I was giving you your whole story!

I met Diana; I have a picture with Diana…

That is not going to endear you to The Queen…
She kept calling me 'Famous Architect' — just 'Famous Architect'.

I have met Princess Anne. I was at the Palace in Barcelona for the Olympics. I was talking to Pasqual Maragall, who was a friend I had done some work with, he was the Mayor of Barcelona at the time. He was talking to a young lady and just as I got there he was called away. So I was left standing with the young lady who was Princess Anne, but I didn't know! Her nametag was on a chain but it was down at crotch level, so I couldn't really look. So for 30 minutes she talked to me about Prince Charles and his architectural tastes. She asked me what I thought and I was quite candid about it. I was very polite with her for about 20 or 30 minutes, then her friend came over to discuss something with her. I looked down and saw it was Princess Anne. Then I became this little boy in Canada with the Your Highness bullshit, that little kid. She knew I had read it and the jig was up, so she split. But before she left, she said about Prince Charles, 'If you've got anything to say to him, tell him yourself!'

I can't be knighted because I am Canadian…

But don't they make exceptions?
Then put it in the article!

Wait a minute; aren't we dealing with France here?
I have the Order of Canada, the highest one – the Companion. And the *Légion d'honneur*…

I used to hang out with Maggie Keswick[2]. I used to go to London and hang out with her and her mother, Claire Keswick. We'd have a few drinks and then they'd get to talking about how I should have a knighthood – this went on for a few years. We're still working on it, but we'll get there!

Being very British about it: By being Canadian you have an advantage, you are seen as being part of the colonies!
You go to New York, and they have never gotten over being part of the colonies. A British accent in New York gives you more traction than anything else. Have you tried it? Any British accent gets jobs or anything – they really go gaga for it in New York. You should ride the wave; it's a good one. Demand first-class travel, demand fancy restaurants – allude to your relative Lord such and such, but you don't want to go into it right now.

My favourite writer is an English guy, Trollope. I love Trollope. I have read everything he's written. Lady Glencora… you've got to read him. Now, this particular handbag I've designed is from that era.

The Trollope era!
Meaghan Lloyd: You see how our handbag meetings go? This is the tenor.
You open the handbag, and it is all Trollope!

I wanted to talk to you about your grandmother, how she inspired you to play with materials and make models…
Yeah, it's probably my grandmother's fault, the handbag! I'll go with anything, you know! It is all part of it.

But I've read your grandmother did inspire you… How to create and make things, how to envision something…
What she did do was open the door to play as an adult. She was willing to sit on the floor and play as an adult and that stuck in my head.

Did you think at first, 'I will be a serious architect', and it took you a while to become playful…
Yes. I think playful is good. If you take it the way some people do, then it becomes a negative when applied to serious architecture. But if you take it as a way to tap your creative spirits, then it is important. The opposite of playful is seriousness, that way you end up with a philosophy and language that seriousness engenders and then you have rules. As soon as you get into the rules, then you are in dangerous territory. The playfulness keeps you out of the rules. If you are intuitive, experimental and like exploring… In fact it is curiosity that is nice. It is a nice place to be when you are creating stuff.

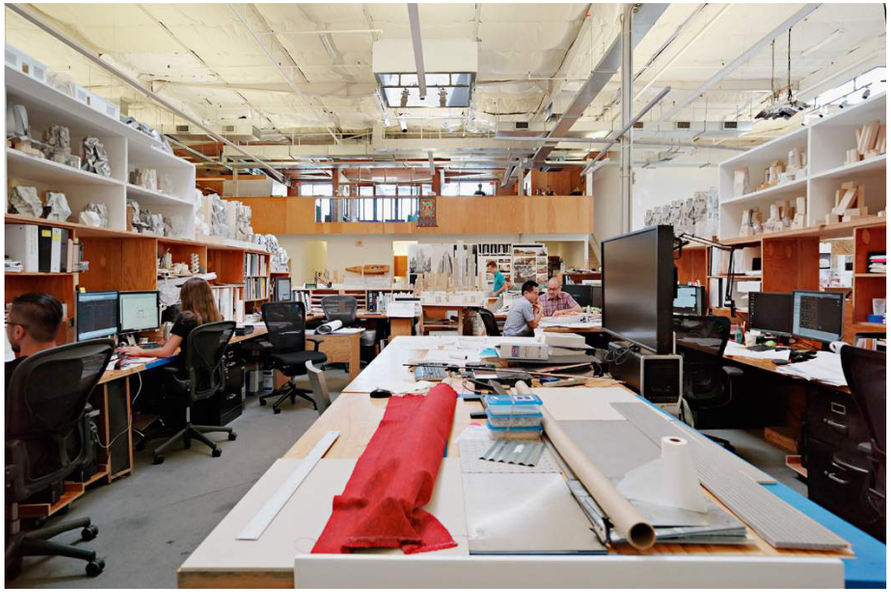
So if you set out to design a handbag that fits in Louis Vuitton's world, which works with their customers, I think it would be contrived. This bag is playful, the experience of making it was playful, but in a serious way.

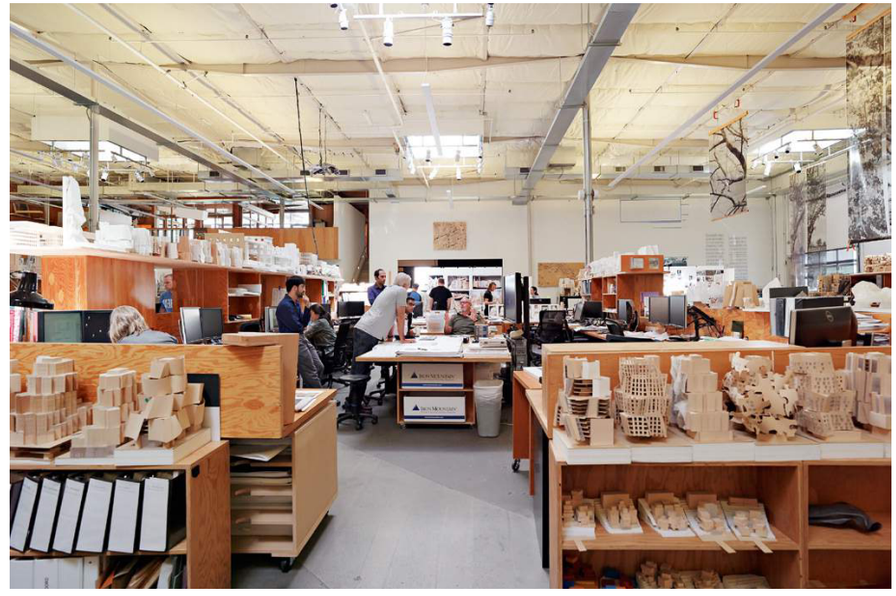
It has to be intuitive – that's how fashion works. It is an intuitive way that you work in architecture; do people resist you working like that?
There is resistance to working in that way because people want to understand it and contextualise it with the world around them. That's a problem; it keeps you going on the same track. Which actually leads to chaos. If you go on organising everything for a very logical development of the world, the world doesn't like that. The world doesn't give a fuck about working like that. And then if you invent a whole language of architecture – which a lot of people have – it is out of touch with reality. But they become academics and academia creates a hierarchy that is counterproductive to exploration and invention.

Did LA give you a freedom?
Yes it did. I saw what happened to colleagues of mine who stayed in New York – they got clobbered! Because they did get these rules. There were the Whites in New York, there were the Silvers out here, and there were the Greys, which was Venturi. The Whites

'I tell you who I would like to see carry the bag, Queen Elizabeth. My idea is that we make a white one and I go to present it to her.'

'I can't be knighted because I'm Canadian. I have the Order of Canada and the *Legion d'honneur*, but we're still working on the knighthood!'





was Richard Meier, the Silvers was Pelli. You had to choose who you were, or else you were put in the box. I was put in the box of deconstruction – I was put in that deconstruction show in MoMa. My house in Santa Monica was put into that category because you looked at it and you thought of the word deconstruction; it was kind of like visual onomatopoeia – that's how they got away with it. I looked at it and said, 'I don't know what you are talking about.' I had the opportunity to meet with [Jacques] Derrida [3] and I asked him what were his intentions using deconstructivism in the literary sense and were there any resonances with what I was doing. He said, 'No, none at all.' I got the pass out! I am out – the boss said, 'I'm OK and I'm out!'

But I did feel awkward being in that show. But I didn't protest it. Philip [Johnson], and all my buddies were in that show and I thought, 'Jeez, there is a nice part to this, I am with my friends.' But I should have protested it; I should have taken myself out if I was serious about things like that. It is just I tend not to be.

Minimalism is a dead end. The guy that was sort of the poster boy for Minimalism was Malevich[4]. He cleansed everything to a black square in a corner – then what do you do? He then started making clothes because he didn't know what to do. Then everyone felt sorry for him, thinking he blew it. He didn't! He just reached a conclusion. I look at the young architects here, comfortable with this Minimalist stuff. But in the end they will hit a wall, I think I have already started to see it happen.

I started to see people do outrageous things because they have nowhere else to go.

There is another aspect to Minimalism that is interesting. If you are very rich, and you feel guilty about being very rich, one way of cleansing your soul is to live in a Minimalist house. So if you look at who hires Minimalist architects, it is the very wealthy. If you look at Mies [van der Rohe] and the Farnsworth House, the Farnsworths were stupendously wealthy. And they built this house where you had to sit in the right place or else you didn't fit. I had these friends who were developers who lived in Baltimore, they used Mies a lot. I used to go to their house for dinner. And they had the fireplace, the double settee, the two chairs and the coffee table by Mies, but it was set out in a very awkward way. I said to them, 'You know, you could make this comfortable,' so I turned the settee to the fireplace and put a chair at either side and it worked.It was very nice. So guess what, three months later I went back to dinner and they had laid all the furniture out the other way. I said 'Why'd you do that?' They told me, 'Out of respect for Mies.' They actually said that!

People like rules…
But really, the richer the people are, they want to cleanse their souls.

Crazily, the handbag does get me thinking about things and talking about things in a different way.

I imagine there would be a lot of 'establishment' architects that would be snooty about me designing a handbag… That's the best part!

You are just not a snob…
[*Laughs*] It is trivial either way. The point is to do something and to see where it goes. It is better than doing nothing! And they are nice people, they try things.

The Foundation has been collaboration – and I like it that way. I want the building to be theirs when I am done. It is my version of theirs, and I am open to that. I fly on that, otherwise I'd make a building that would look like something I've done before. This way I am helped to stay more flexible and in flux. We'll certainly have a handbag show.

Meaghan Lloyd: There will be spaces for exhibitions… The Foundation is separate from the company.
We have not had any of that bureaucratic stuff, not with the building…

'I imagine there would be a lot of "establishment" architects that would be snooty about me designing a handbag… That's the best part.'

[*We originally attempted a Proust Questionnaire in addition to this interview… Frank becomes diverted by it.***]**

I have filled out a Proust Questionnaire before – it would be interesting to compare them… But don't show me the last one until I have done this…

'What is your current state of mind?'
It is total idiocy.

Did the bag reflect the structure of a building you already worked on?
See that building there, the silver one, it is in Hanover, Germany. The bag has a similar structure to that if you lay it on its side… I didn't realise this until afterwards. I started with the twist way back in the models. If you lay the building horizontal, it has the first structure of the bag – but I realised this after the fact. We got to the bag in a different way, but we got to the same place. I didn't say, 'Joycey, let's make a bag like this.' We didn't realise.

You like Bernini[5], the Bernini books…
Yes, you know there is the fountain in Piazza Navona? See the slices in the stone; they were Bernini's thumbprints in the clay. If you look at the thing, there is a mass of clay with thumbprints. It's intuitive, it's expressive, it's stupid, it's funny, but it turns into one of the best parts of his sculpture.

What would you say is your signature?
My big nose.

Meaghan Lloyd: He's teaching his class at Yale – I was one of his students in his master class – and he teaches everyone about the importance of individuality. He wants everyone to have his or her own signature. So signature for you is to be who you are and how to express that. He said to us the best part of being an architect is that you get to live your life out loud in your work, and if you don't, people will not care. If you don't care about yourself, people will feel that, and if you don't put yourself into the work, people will feel that. So be yourself, whoever that is.

I love seeing people in what they do, the more extreme the better, so you feel this person might be quite mad. I think it is important to support it, to buy what they do.
I feel the same.

If you don't have a sense of idiocy in fashion, it isn't chic.
You make me want to throw the bag away and start again!

No, it's great – it's doll-like and not monolithic. It isn't macho. It is the least macho of all of them. But still strong. What is it like to deal with an icon of luxury after you have become known for the opposite?
I am not judgemental about luxury; I am not judgemental one way or the other.

The Santa Monica House could be seen as made up of the detritus of the industrial world… It linked to what you played with as a child.
I just didn't have any money was the fact! And I don't really like fancy…

Meaghan Lloyd: But you love playing with craftsman… To get that shape and the edge, the crispness of the leather…
I was told there would not be that many and if luxury means craftsmanship, I thought it would be fun to play with the craftsmen, to push them. They take craftsmanship very seriously at Louis Vuitton, and that's what I like.

Meaghan Lloyd: You don't have judgement about anybody – you put everybody on the same playing field… I don't want to speak for you.
She really does!

Again, no rules, no penance.
We do boats, too. We do everything you know. That's why I am going to Maine.

Meaghan Lloyd: It's going to appear like a slice of wood going through the water… Latticework windows.
You put up with my crazy.

[*As I attempt to dispose of a sandwich wrapper…***]**

Don't litter my office, I am very precise.

[*Frank Gehry's office is far from precise.*]

There will always be an England. I go there often, I like it.

1. During the 1960s, Rudi Gernreich (1922-1985) was considered the most radical designer in the United States. He strove to liberate the body of any constraints through design. He is probably best remembered for his 'monokini' – a topless swimsuit. He was also an early supporter of the Mattachine Society, one of the earliest civic and political rights group for homosexuals in the United States.

2. Maggie Jenks, née Keswick, along with her husband, the architect Chales Jenks, founded the Maggie's Cancer Caring Centres, a network of drop-in clinics across the UK and Hong Kong that offer support to those who have been affected by cancer. A part from her philanthropic endeavours. Maggie was also a well-respected landscape architect and gardener. With Frank Gehry she worked on the garden at the Lewis House, in Cleveland, Ohio.

3. The French philosopher, Jacques Derrida, developed an analytical theory — and eventual movement — 'deconstruction' which challenges traditional assumptions about certainty, identity and truth by questioning the ability of language to represent reality.

4. Kasimir Malevich (1873-1935) was a Russian painter, teacher and theoreticist. He founded the 'Supremist' art movement. In the book *The Non-Objective World* he states: 'Art no longer cares to serve the state and religion, it no longer wishes to illustrate the history of manners, it wants to have nothing further to do with the object, as such, and believes that it can exist, in and for itself, without "things" (that is, the "time-tested well-spring of life"). His most famous 'Supremist' artwork is the Black Square.

5. Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680) was an Italian artist, considered to be the 'Father' of Baroque sculpture. His most famous works are Bernini also worked as an architect, with his most famous work being the piazza leading to St Peter's Basilica at the Vatican City.

‘It was time to set faces free.’

How Serge Lutens’ Dior era sparked a beauty revolution.

By Thomas Lenthal
Images and photographs by Serge Lutens

***The Adventurous*, Anjelica Huston, 1972, Made in 1971.**
‘As we were, Anjelica Huston and I, one and the same person holding each other’s mirror; we took this journey – we didn’t know where to – together.’

Make-up Art, *Fernand Léger*, Isabelle Weingarten, 1973.
'Photography which I consider an exercise in style based on 20th-century painting, and the example here shows a Fernand Léger.'

Make-Up Art, *Pointillist*, 1973.
'Scarf and decor painted the previous week before the shoot, still in this series chronicling 20th-century painting, pointillism and more precisely Seurat.'

***The Carmines*, Susan Moncur, 1974.**
'If it hadn't been the summer, in southern Ardèche and myself, during that horrible time known as 'the holidays' made me impatiently stamp out this imaginary flamenco; this hat which is an assemblage of glued and painted cardboard might not have answered *my* Spain.'

***The Venetian Pearls*, Louise Despointes, 1975.**
'The cane is painted to look like poles used for mooring gondolas. The Executioner of Venice, the water and the delicate lace that is Louise floating on Vivaldi's music.'

***Collections*, Ela, 1974.**
'*Elle* had asked for my vision of the collections.
January 1978: She is more like a butterfly pinned from all sides,
when Ela wears this Dior suit.'

***The Fantastics*, Louise Despointes, 1974.**
'From the summit to the lower forehead, this vertigo – which is my own – continues
to coil around the arm and then lower down ends up in an iridescence of tulle.'

***The Rhythms*, Yvonne Sporre, 1979, Made in 1978.**
'A musical ear will recognise that never has a score been so remarkable!
Music by Gershwin, *Rhapsody in Blue*… in beige.'

***Choc Clair*, Yvonne Sporre, 1979.**
'Against a pierced background, her face resting on a fake hand which could have been her own,
Yvonne Sporre's face poses like on a needle, and we thread the thread.'

***Lyrical Reds*, Yvonne Sporre, 1980, Made in 1979.**
'In order to make this statue's clothing fly, my fingers had to carry
the wind within the clay… first sculpted, then moulded, then lacquered.
"I am fair, O mortals! Like a dream carved in stone."'

***Collections*, Elena Koudoura, 1996.**
'This time, it's the *New York Times* who asked for my vision of the collections,
and so it seemed to me that this dress was made for climbing stairs.'

To call Serge Lutens a photographer, hair and make-up stylist, art director, filmmaker, and perfumer par excellence is to miss something more essential than all of these talents. Lutens is so immersed in his vision of beauty, from the olfactory to the visual, that whatever form he works in, whether creating make-up or shooting an ad campaign, it is yet another expression of his aesthetic, his idea of beauty and perfection.

Born in Lille in 1942, Lutens was separated from his mother when he was only weeks old. The child of an affair, unwanted by his own family, he spent his youth being passed between different foster families and homes. These early experiences, the lack of a maternal influence and a stable home are key to understanding Lutens' life-long dedication to inventing a woman and constructing his own – or an – identity through a concise body of work.

In 1962, Lutens abandoned Lille and moved to Paris where he was immediately hired by *Vogue*. Throughout the decade he went on to collaborate with masters of photography such as Richard Avedon, Guy Bourdin and Irving Penn, constructing a vision through make-up, jewellery and accessories.

Shortly after, in 1967, Christian Dior commissioned Lutens to create a new line of cosmetics, which were so radically different that Diana Vreeland described them as a 'Revolution of Make-up'! For the House of Dior he produced colours, styles and images. His vision was unified in the campaigns which he shot and their success was resounding. Serge Lutens' make-up and imagery became the symbol of freedom for a new generation.

During his tenure at Dior, Serge Lutens realised a way of seeing and feeling, an aesthetic approach to beauty and image making, the profound influence of which is indisputable on contemporary photography and advertising. Casting an eye back to this early period of Lutens' extensive career, *System* presents a curated portfolio his work for Dior, a body of work that not only re-invigorated the traditional codes of the House but that has, decades later, retained the unrivalled modernism and high creativity championed by its creator.

Thomas Lenthal: What was your first visual aesthetic memory?

Serge Lutens: I don't know if I can really pick out one specific memory. Between the age of one and seven, the age of reason, they have all merged into one. They became fixed in my brain at the age of ten, creating a single memory. I am a love child, I'm told, and I was deprived of contact with my mother in the early years – so I invented a woman. That just about sums up my story.

So no particular image comes back?

Thousands… Some are more literary or imaginary, others are founded in real events, but they are, let me tell you, all real.

If you can't pinpoint a particular childhood visual, was there anything in your adolescence that influenced you aesthetically?

Without a doubt it was the cinema. Films opened my eyes and stayed with me once I'd left the cinema. What an impact they had, in black and white on the screen.

How old were you then?

About 15, 16. I can't remember.

German Expressionist films?

Yes of course, but also ciné-club films with those agitated women with white make-up and deep dark eyes making marked symbolic gestures.

So from childhood to adolescence, what information did you receive that could have led you into fashion?

I don't think there were any, nothing in particular, I could have liked. I had to invent a woman, and let me tell you, disgust is very much part of my being. My role was to change things. The chemistry was either there or it wasn't.

Such as? This is interesting!

I didn't see people as they were. They were ghosts, beautiful or ugly, friends or enemies. Bright eyes, long necks, silhouettes, it was definitely a case of love or hate.

Such as?

People who were too categorical, too caught up in an image of themselves, how others saw them. I'm thinking about a woman called Andrée. She terrified me. When she moved she was a series of volumes: big hair, hairpieces and poufs holding up an impeccably lacquered coiffure. A bound construction with perfectly painted nails, the half-moon clearly exposed. Coming back to the face, I remember a heavy orange-red lipstick on a face which, too, was rather puffy. Her body was most often held in a white dress decorated with daisies or poppies… It was like having a sofa made up of hips, buttocks, thighs, chest, hair and nails plant a red-orange mark on my reluctant cheek. And that mark is still there today!

Are we talking about the 1950s?

The 1950s in Lille? It was the same as anywhere else, was it not?

This woman, she scared you?

It was a fashion. She was disfigured by it. I'm not afraid of women unless they are – like Andrée – victims of an image they are determined to squeeze themselves into, time and time again.

Talking of big hair, when you were 14 didn't you do an apprenticeship in a hair salon?

I was not happy there. I was caught up in hair, hairpins, dryers, curlers and the smell of ammonia. It was all about women who found it impossible to exist in this environment. It was as cringe-worthy as a George Grosz[1] caricature.

So you learnt how to do hair?

I spent my time undoing what wasn't right, working against the flow. At the end of the day I never learnt anything. I have unburdened myself of everything I was taught.

You still have vivid memories of cutting hair in that salon?

Fragmented memories. I can still hear: 'Serge, look after this young lady!' and then I see a girl whose face is as sad as mine, so I like her, but once she is in front of the mirror, a split appears and I finally see the women in me. Armed with a pair of scissors, I respond, giving expression to everything that has been silenced as I cut the first mesh. But in cutting I go 'too far' for the era and those who are watching. I am surrounded by a silence so oppressive that it seems to foster chitter-chatter and whispers. I know that if I turn around and acknowledge them, the cut will never end. So the scissors, my hand, my anger, the time, my age, society, death and my fear cut through the second lock of hair and, in doing so, declare a beauty war against these *assholes*.

Why did you decide to move from Lille to Paris?

There were *events*… the war in Algeria, and I was called up. Military service scared me. The thought of being with all the soldiers panicked me. I was frightened of them and even more so of myself. In the beginning, I feigned all sorts of illnesses until a genuine depression hit. There was the hospital and the other mentally afflicted, no doubt like myself. We were called 'mad'. That's less ridiculous than 'mentally deficient', the term used today.

How long were you there for?

I think about six months, but that story's not important.

What year did you start at *Vogue*?

It was 1962, the end of the Algerian War but a declaration of another war between three women at *Vogue*: Edmonde Charles-Roux, Françoise Mohrt and Françoise de Langlade. The latter was seconded from American *Vogue* to deal with the magazine's politics. At that time, *Vogue* really was a publication for intelligent women. There were articles about art, literature and poetry and a very clear vision of contemporary style — not just passing fashion. Françoise Mohrt was in charge of the magazine's beauty pages.

So you presented these images to *Vogue*…

Yes, and Françoise Mohrt told me she 'couldn't believe her eyes'. It seemed wonderful that someone could be so 'astonished' by me! I remember the day well for a very good reason: I spent hours waiting in the café adjacent to their offices. There was absolutely nothing else I could do. Then I was told: 'You will be working for the Christmas issue.' That was where it all began. Other magazines followed: *Elle, Jardin des modes*… These publications had their own personalities.

In 1962, who were the French photographers at *Vogue Paris*?

Jean-Loup Sieff and, more importantly, Guy Bourdin. I was with him at the beginning of his graphic period. That was before he moved on to his risqué period: the maid on all fours, the man of the house comes home…

When did you meet Bourdin?

On my first visit to the magazine. *Vogue* at the time was a temple. I arrived fully-prepared, extremely well-presented as usual. That day should have been the beginning of a new chapter; but life is a long book and we never stop turning the pages. I saw the magazine in a fateful,

'I spent my time undoing what wasn't right, working against the flow. I never learnt anything. I unburdened myself of everything I was taught.'

'I'm not afraid of women unless they are victims of an image they are determined to squeeze themselves into, time and time again.'

somewhat otherworldly light. I thought it was an omen that the surname of the travel editor, Simone Brousse, translates as The Outback. You must admit it was unusual! As for Bourdin, his appearance on the scene turned *Vogue* into a sinking ship. He was waving his arms about in grand gestures but was seen as nothing more than a clown.

Tell me a bit more about how Bourdin operated to obtain the images he wanted. For example his rapport with the models…
He set out to humiliate the model, to make her feel inferior. He loved her and detested her at the same time. I have seen him presenting his photographs speaking in a doddery, nasal voice, turning beauty into something of an object of ridicule.

artists, hairdressers, accessory departments, editors, secretaries – a whole audience waiting to applaud because, unlike Penn, Avedon was a bit of a Casanova. It was all lovey-dovey. It was surprising, and by surprising I mean false to its luxury core!

And Newton?
I liked Helmut Newton. He was a charming, extremely elegant snob. His mother had once told him, 'You will be the final nail in my coffin.' How's that for a compliment? We got on rather well. I was 'multi-talented'. I knew how to style hair, apply make-up, accessorise and dress a girl for a photo shoot. I even had blue arm tattoos with all sorts of vintage erotic effigies, sailors, anchors and other slightly macabre accessories.

Dior Parfums?
As soon as I met René Bourdon[2]. He was the Managing Director of Dior Parfums at the time, and also the father of Pierre Bourdon. He asked me to create lipsticks. I replied that I'd never done it and he said, 'It's easy. Come with me to the laboratory, and I'll show you how it's done.' I refused. There were too many people. So they gave me some coloured pastes and small dishes, and I set about melting them in a bain-marie, creating the lipsticks thousands of women were going to wear, all in my own kitchen. That was how it was for 14 years! My first creation was a series of shiny, transparent lipsticks. The colours and textures were revolutionary. They were liked by some and, as always, feared by others, because Dior had created a fixed idea of lipsticks and nail varnishes that

'What I did hadn't existed as a profession, neither had in-house make-up artists. You didn't hear talk about it. I invented it.'

Did you work with Irving Penn?
I worked with more or less all the great photographers of the time and with Penn for American *Vogue*. He was very strange, very self-contained – a bit like me in fact, very reserved. Everything was done for him. His jeans were ironed and laid flat on a little bed where he could rest, his slippers… no noise and certainly not any music. Models had to be happy, laugh and smile without once having a compliment paid to them or being told they were beautiful, and wait until Penn got the exact shot he wanted. The editor didn't say a word. She was Diana Vreeland's assistant. Her eyes were razor-sharp. She honed in on all the faults Penn might find. Avedon, on the other hand, took the model on a journey. Each shot was a performance with its own make-up

So you took photos for *Vogue*, but you also led a double career collaborating with other photographers…
A triple, fourfold career, but I fashioned it to suit myself. In 1967, Dior was planning a make-up line. With the exception of a few lipsticks and nail varnishes created by Christian Dior himself, this was new ground for Dior. I was a young man at the time and Dior seemed to me to be a formidable, outmoded fashion house. Yves Saint Laurent had left, and Dior was far from what it has become today! It was the reign of Courrèges, who liked to think of himself as the Le Corbusier of fashion. It was all change – for me too. I had never learnt how to apply make-up but could see with my own eyes that I knew how to do it.

At what point did you start working on

was difficult to shift. Imagine trying to straighten the Tower of Pisa.

Was Peter Knapp there at the time?
Peter Knapp was the Artistic Director of *Elle*. He never worked for Dior. He gave me carte blanche to photograph, invent and transform the 1976 haute couture winter collections.

Why did you decide to give the shades transparency and lightness?
It was time to set faces free. They were all prisoners of foundation, overheavy make-up and stupid ideas for achieving so-called beautification. However it was actually myself who I was liberating.

So when you brought the colours to Dior, did you tell them that?
No, but I showed them entirely new

formulations – not too shiny, because I don't like shiny – which let the texture of the lips show through, unlike the lipsticks which covered it completely. It was a revolution, and I became known as 'a genius'. That's what they called me.

So to Dior…
Sorry, I'm talking too much. I've lost my train of thought in fact.

No not at all. How did you end up taking charge of the brand image?
It just happened. Pictures became more important than make-up. I hadn't forgotten the time when I got my fingers burnt with hairdressing and in fact the same thing happened with make-up. What interested me was the image of a woman. This allowed me to free myself from her, embracing both sides of me.

Hommage à la peinture, Make-up Art.

Once you'd got your foot into Dior, did you stop working at *Vogue*?
No, but my work took on another meaning, because I was both a star of the make-up world and a photographer.

And you became Monsieur Dior…
Not really because I was first and foremost Serge Lutens, a natural descendant of the 'audacity' line.

So you devoted yourself to the House at this point?
Never, I would only ever dedicate myself to a woman. Dior was Dior and I was, for every person, what I allowed myself to be at that particular moment in time. Deep down I was only ever Serge Lutens.

to feature in them. A photo a day was enough.

Tell me about the casting.
Anjelica Huston, Isabelle Weingarten, Louise Despointes, Susan Moncur were the stars of my shots. Isabelle had the body of a goddess. I wonder whether she knew that. Draped in a panther skin with the paws attached round her waist, her half-naked body painted white, Isabelle danced to Duke Ellington from his Jungle Band period. I saw each girl as an individual. Some wore my dinner suits. The idea of pinching something from a man was chic; a form of self-expression or sort of role reversal. These girls felt things. This sort of model no longer exists. Anjelica Huston told me she heard her parents speaking one day; her mother, the lead dancer with

'Faces were prisoners of foundation, overheavy make-up and stupid ideas for achieving so-called beautification.'

Was it the notion of capturing this vision that was suddenly important?
The end product was actually never of interest to me. It was my way of understanding this woman. There was a time when it all came together in photography.

When did you begin to do shoots?
When I took my first cautious steps through their door, between 1968 and 1970. Then there was the idea which officially endorsed my shots. It came from an American who wanted to shake up the make-up industry in America and, to do so, link it with a promotion with the Guggenheim in New York. So I accepted the challenge of this exercise in style, basing it on my favourite artists: Picasso, Léger, Modigliani… They called it a homage to art:

A photo by Serge Lutens from that time – was it retouched?
Definitely not. Retouching tools had not yet been invented. Everything was done by hand. It was a manual skill. What people do with computers today, I did by hand until I achieved perfection. It took hours: a white base for the face, my way of reaching inside this woman, but I'm talking too much. What I did hadn't existed as a profession, neither had in-house make-up artists. You didn't hear talk about it. I invented it.

Roughly how many hours did it take to do the hair and make-up?
It was quite a ritual. The models weren't paid like their modern-day counterparts. Time was for communication, achieving elegance. I prepared the sessions and the models who were

Balanchine's New York City Ballet, and her father John Huston were saying, 'Anjelica isn't very pretty.' At this Anjelica came out from behind the curtains, went back up to her room, sat in front of the mirror and said, 'I will make myself pretty!' Being pretty means nothing. It's the desire to be pretty that makes you pretty.

Now a silly question, did you work with a medium-format camera?
I worked with the 24x36 format. I like compact cameras rather than the computers of today, covered in buttons. My collaborator, Patrice Nagel, adjusted the lighting.

Big Lights?
Umbrellas, soft lighting and a spotlight on the face. A few touches of strong,

expressive colours – greens, purples – in the hair or on the cheeks.

Did you use Polaroids?
Of course. If we wanted to test the film and see the result, we had to wait a whole night. It's hard to imagine photography as the ritual it was, all the waiting that was involved. Today you see the result right away. The images no longer have to be transposed. They remain inside the camera in portable form.

What was the mood on the set? Calm and concentrated? Angry?
The idea was essentially for the girls I photographed and myself to change places – a role reversal. If I was making exaggerated gestures, I was really looking for them to take the lead and inject some magic into the shot.

the designer can never win.

Every collection for Dior had a story, a narrative. I think that was quite unique, no?
At the time, the popular colours, purple, red, yellow…, in the collections I did for Dior were more than just a choice of eye shadow – women saw them as a form of revolt! This was when women were burning their bras. It was a form of protest, until they noticed that their breasts were sagging, so they started to wear them again. As for the eye shadows, if only one out of three was used up, what more could we possibly wish for?

Colour has a determining effect on people; for example, Yves Saint Laurent's childhood in Morocco had a determining role on his view on colour…
But Yves Saint Laurent dreamt of a totally black collection! Black was the only colour he liked. The three people known for black are – if I am not mistaken – Gabrielle Chanel, Yves Saint Laurent and myself, no less! Black is not a choice. You fall under its charm, and only those who really understand it are true aficionados.

So Dior lasted from 1967 to 1981?
The people at Dior could not believe I was leaving. Did they think I was joking? They thought it was a clever tactic – that I was testing them. They didn't want to accept the truth.

When did you first go to Japan?
In 1971 and immediately afterwards to Hong Kong. I liked these countries.

Let's talking about the white make-up which is often used in traditional Japanese make-up. When you first did it, was it in relation to Japan or completely aside from that?
As I already mentioned, cinema was the main factor behind my use of white make-up, but I have always been really attracted to white skins. The pallor did of course come up for criticism, but it caught on in the fashion world.

And this connection with this Japanese tradition of white foundation?
That's a very different thing. For me, the link with Japan is perfection, achievement and to a certain extent, death, when understood in the sense of final achievement.

Was your first trip to Japan in 1971 a professional visit?
Yes, it was with Dior. It was a huge success. I had put together a slideshow set to the music of my jazz heroes of the 1920s and 1930s, with a bit of Bach, Mozart…

Who was invited to this incredible show?
The press, all sorts of designers, guests of Dior. I didn't know anybody, and I didn't want to get too involved. I like to stay in the background. Yet this was where I met designers like Yohji Yamamoto, Kansai and Issey Miyake. I began to work with [the model] Sayoko Yamaguchi when I was still with Dior. She was a true beauty with the sensitivity of a little girl. In actual fact, I've only ever worked with little girls. My life has been a masked ball with no adults.

You said once that it is not women but *one* woman…
Yes and her role is inside me. She is at once both my anger and my revolt, because if this weren't the case, she would not be a woman and, therefore, would not be inside me.

I now understand why the Japanese got involved with such gusto.
We were destined to meet. They were inside me before I even went to Japan.

Did you travel to New York also?
Ah yes, with Dior. At times I spent more than a month there for press meetings, but travel bores me – it's not for me.

Now you live in Marrakech?
I bought a house there in 1974. It inhabits me more than I live in it. A few kilometres away in my palm grove, all I need is a room – enough space for some books and the part of me you'll never know.

Do you take photos when you're there?
Yes, if necessary. I write. I am very active. My life in Morocco is much more creative than it ever will be in Paris.

Do you draw?
Yes, of course. A bit of everything. I sketch rather than draw: clothes, pictures, houses, furniture etc. With Dior I discovered a new world, Morocco shortly followed by Japan, but at the end of the day what I found more than anything was my own personal identity: myself.

'Black is not a choice. You fall under its charm, and only those who understand it are true aficionados because the colour is within them.'

How did people within Dior respond to what you were doing?
There were two camps: those who loved my work unconditionally and cried when they saw my photos, and others who never had a part to play. It's always the same!

So every time you presented an image there was a sort of committee?
My work was always challenged. I predicted things – sometimes up to 20 years in advance – and fashion very much followed my lead, but I don't give a damn about fashion! I have only one audience in me and it is female. The Director at the time was called Bernard Picot. I never accepted being judged by what people might think about my work. Directions are always taken to fulfil a creative need and an inherent doubt, so

Can you give me another example of this?
Courrèges for example, he wasn't a proponent of colour. Bachelard said, 'Black is the refuge from all the colours.' You couldn't put it better. Colours hide, take refuge, in black. Those who have secrets can speak of the black because the colour is within them.

1. George Grosz (1893-1959) was a German artist based in Berlin during the Weimar Republic. He rose to prominence as member of the Berlin Dada and New Objectivity movements and expressed his communist sympathies through his 'anti-art'. He is best known for pen-and-ink drawings and caricatures of 1920s Berlin.

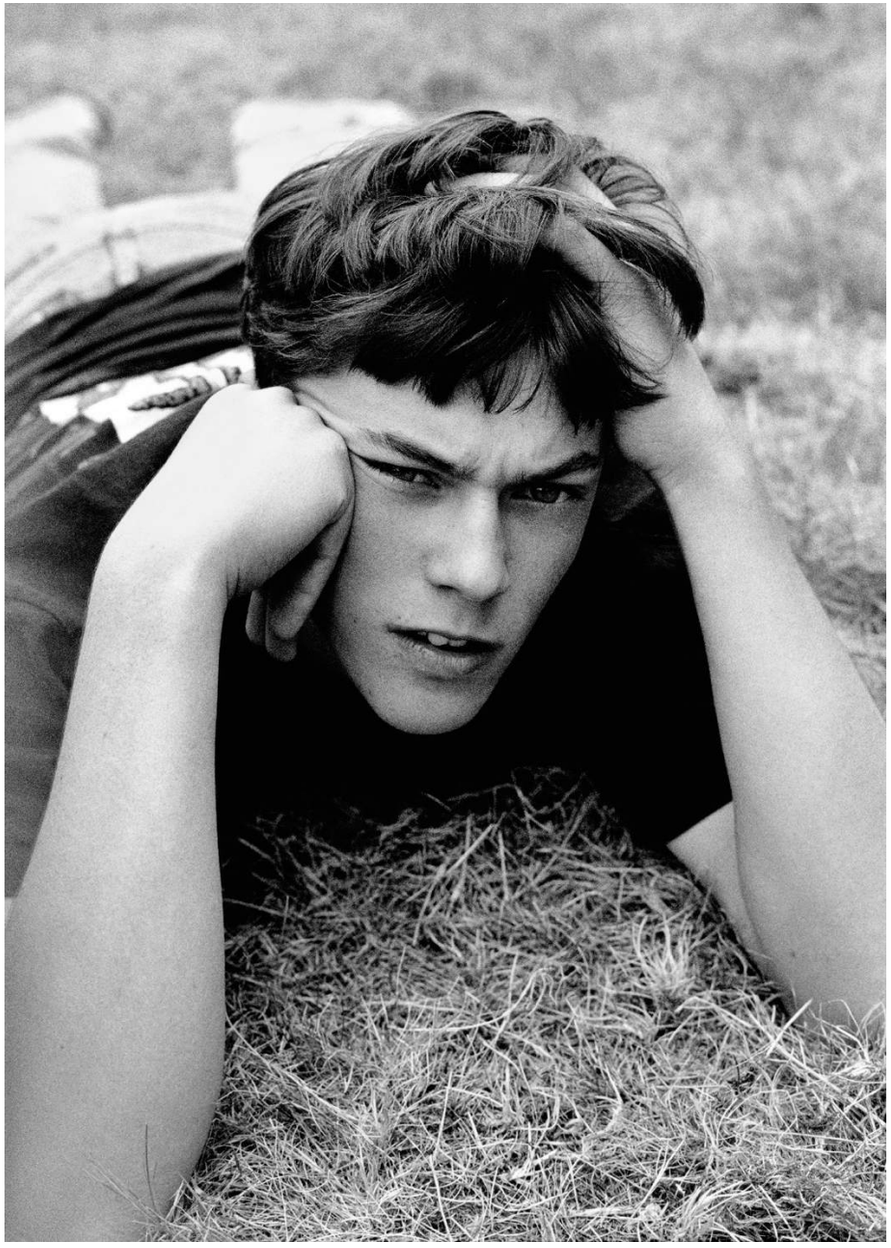
2. As a protégé of the legendary perfumer Edmond Routnistka, Pierre Bourdon has created many fragrances including Cool Water by Davidoff and Christian Dior's Dolce Vita.

‘The light is always lovely where I am from.’

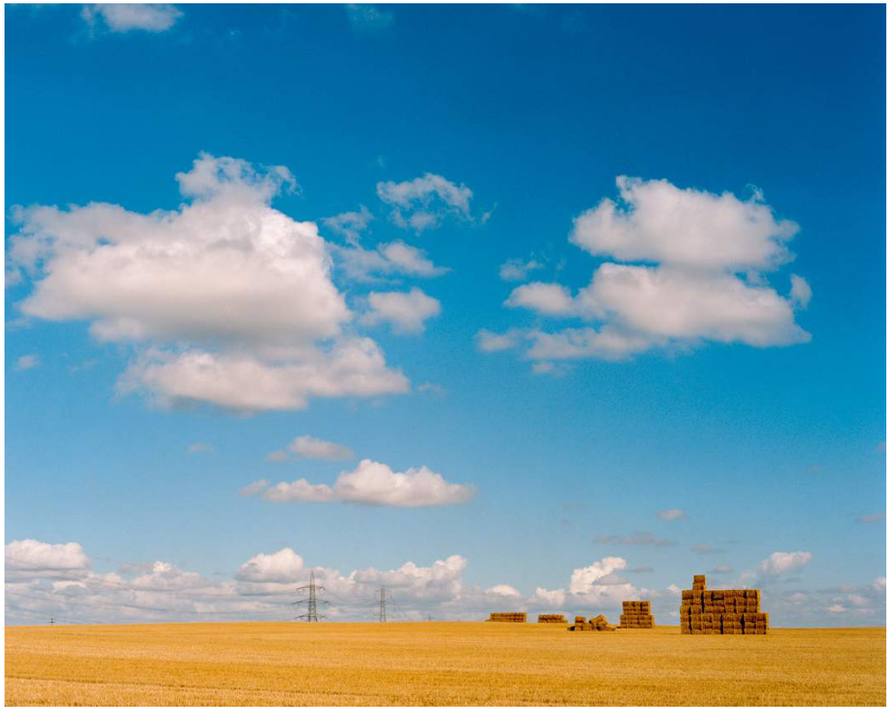
Alasdair McLellan returns to Doncaster, South Yorkshire to discuss how the landscape of his youth continues to inform his aesthetic.

By Jo-Ann Furniss
Photographs by Alasdair McLellan

The Bench, Tickhill, 2014.

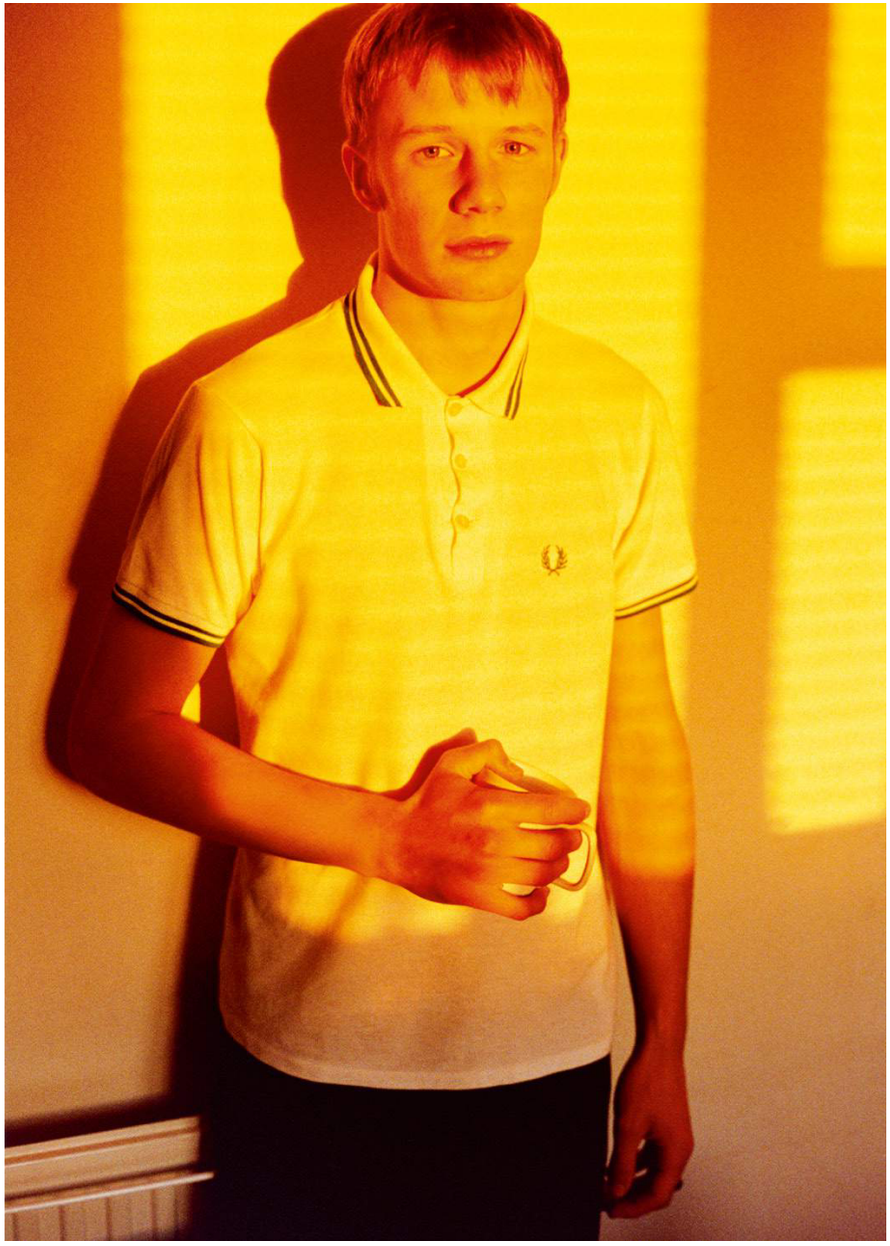


Waterdale Centre, 2013.
Opposite page: Jamie, Tickhill, 1990.



Tickhill Road, 2014.

Sam Rollinson on mum's garden wall, Tickhill, 2014.



Styling: Joe McKenna. Out-take from a shoot for *L'Uomo Vogue*, 2002.

Sam, Tickhill, 2002.
Opposite page: Heath, 1993.

Conisbrough Viaduct, 2013.

Styling: Olivier Rizzo. Published in *Doing Bird*, 2005.

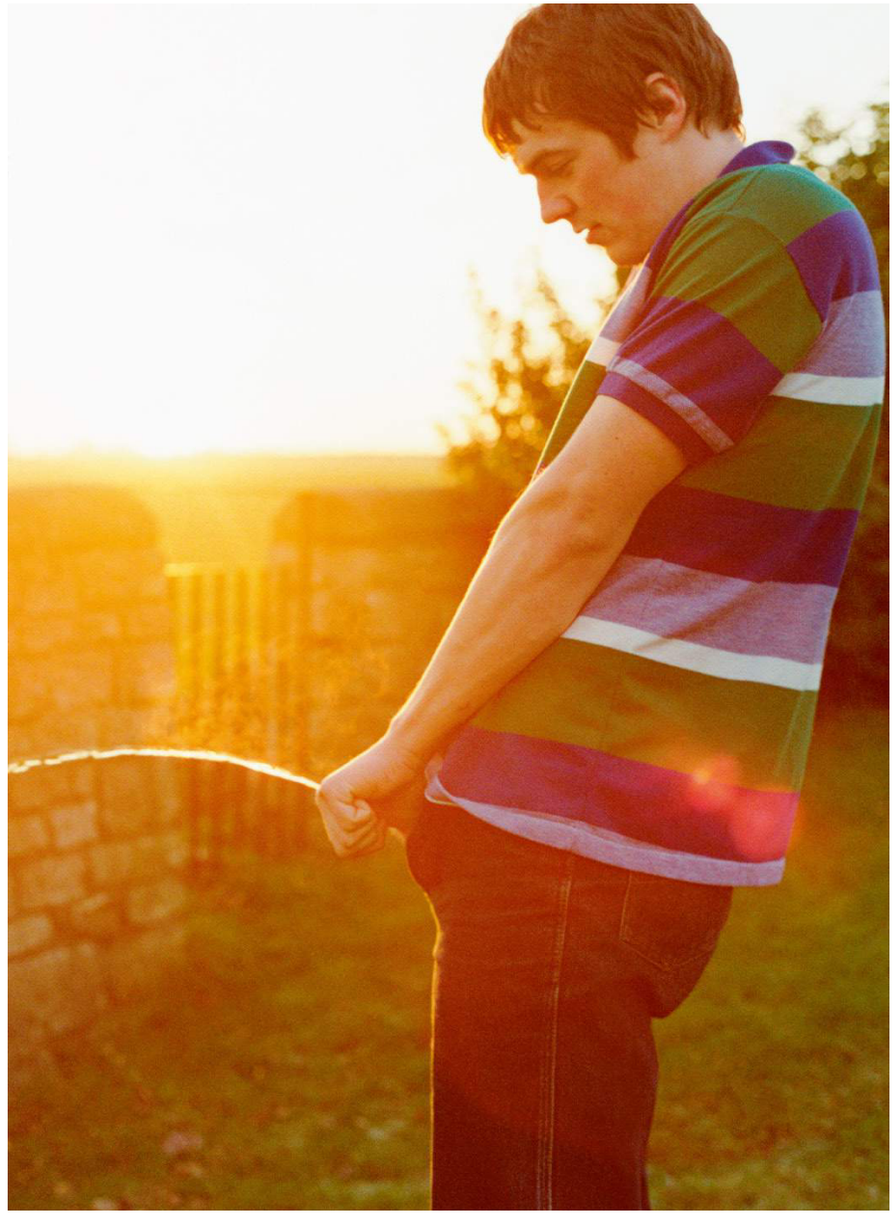
Collum in mum's kitchen, 2005.

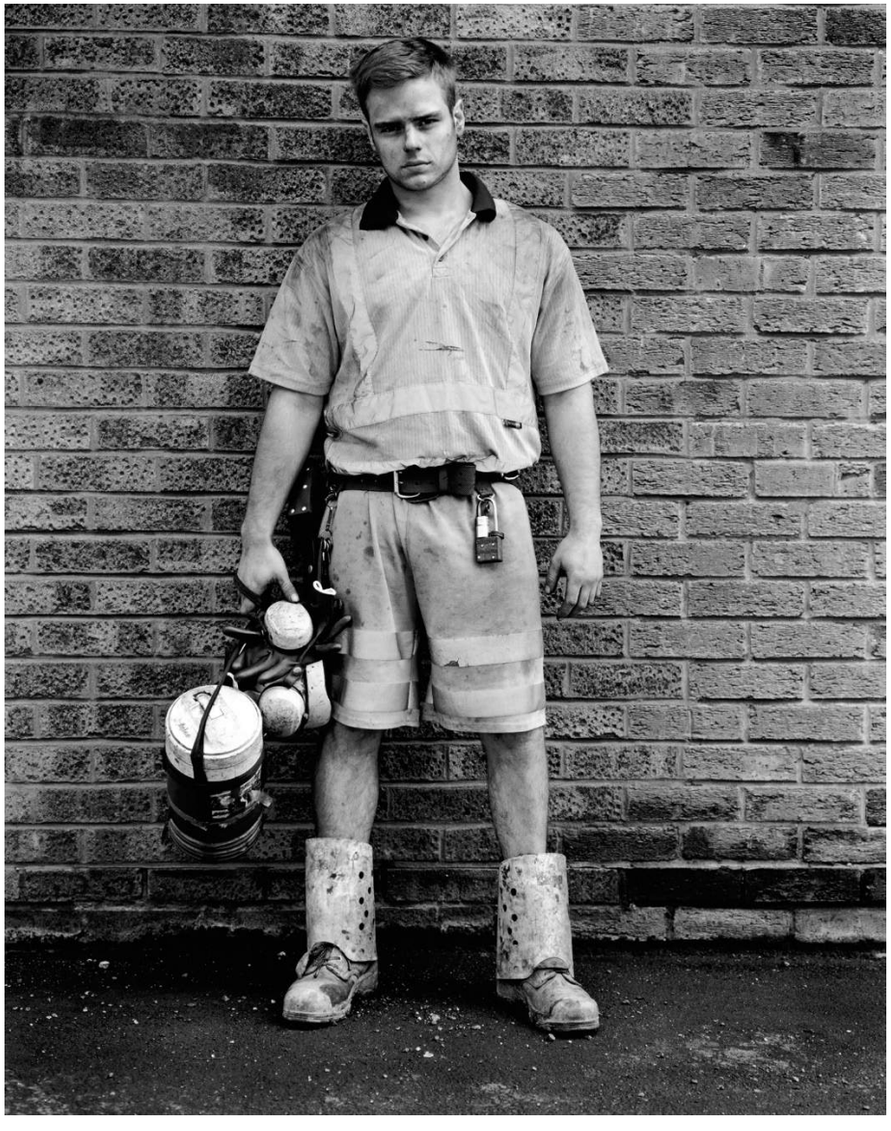
Imogen, 2010.

Styling: Jane How. Out-take from a shoot for *Arena Homme Plus*, 2010.

Saint Mary's Church of England School, Tickhill, 1990.

Harworth Colliery, 2014.
Opposite page: Jamie in mum's garden, Tickhill,1992.



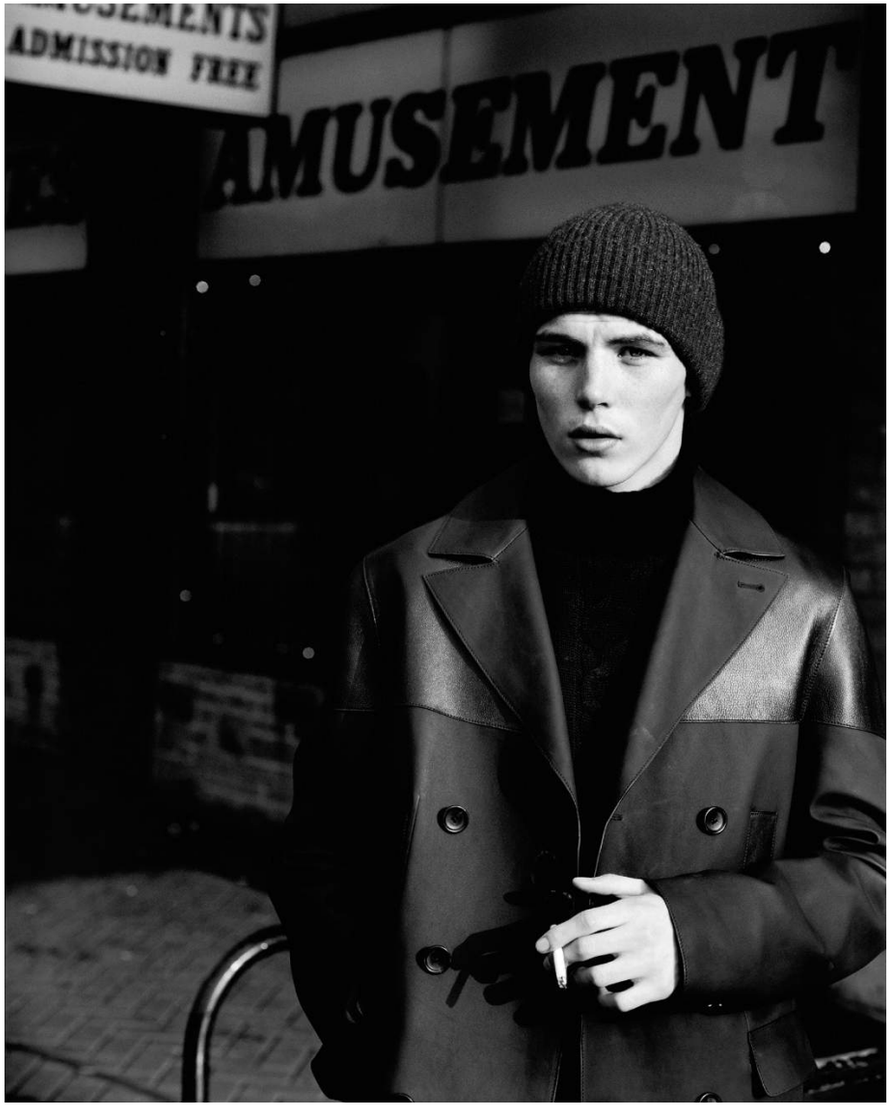


Josh, Miner, Thoresby Colliery, 2013.

Yorkshire Main Memorial Garden, Edlington, 2014.

Reload Nightclub, 2013.

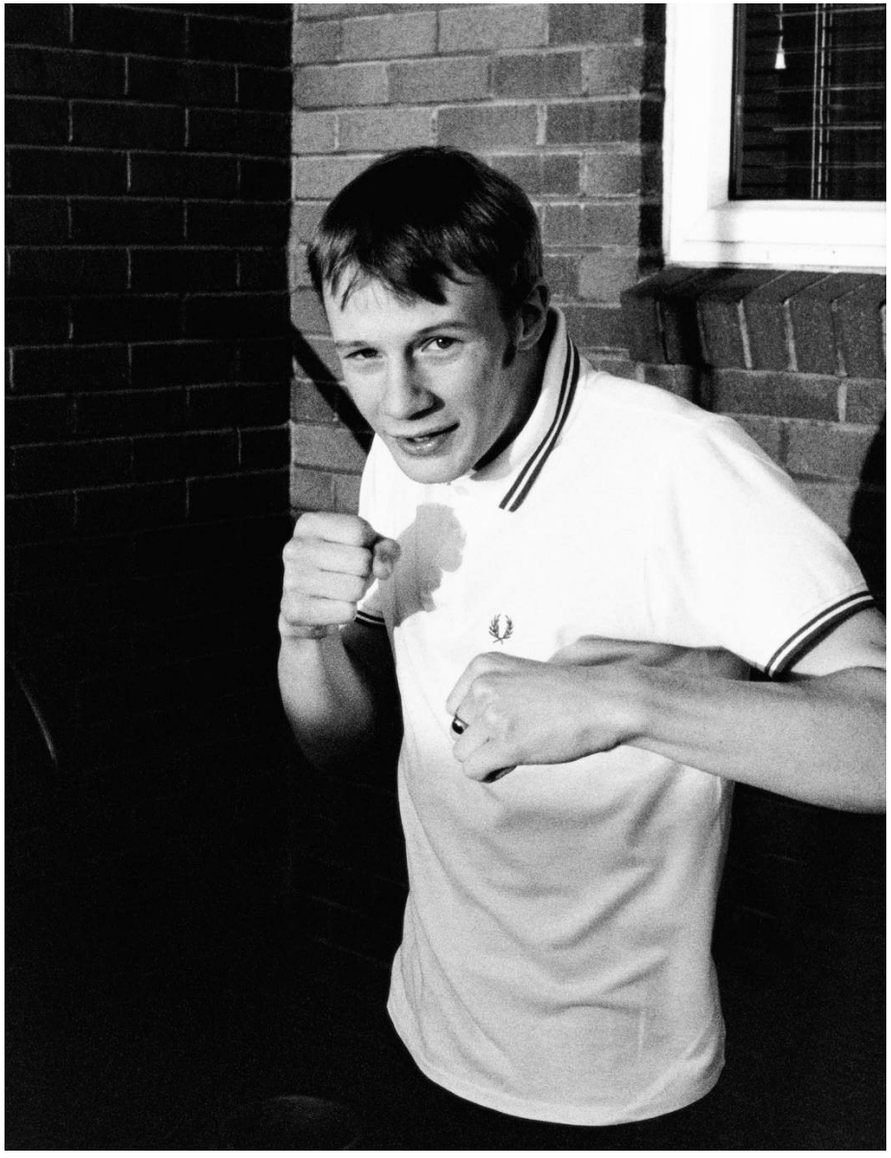
Lad, Edlington, 2014.



Darryl, 2010.

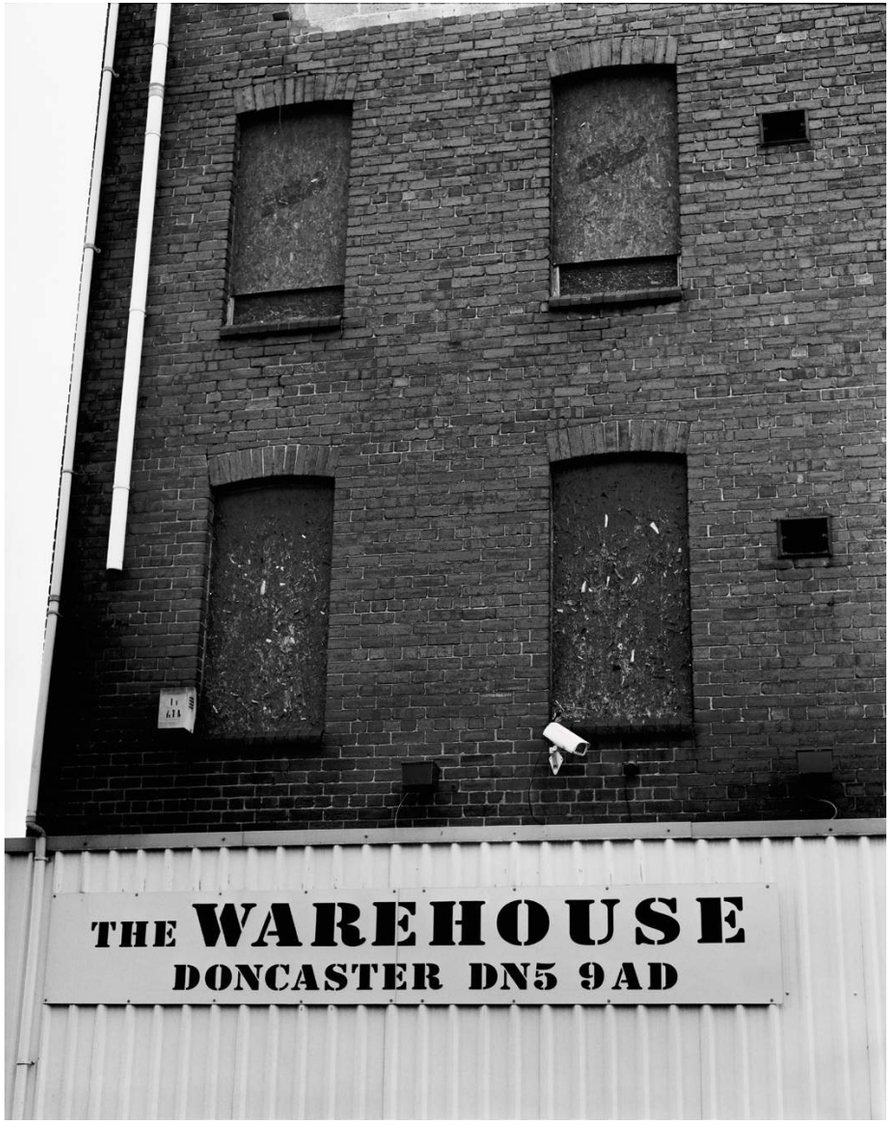
Styling: Jane How. Out-take from a shoot for *Arena Homme Plus*, 2010.

Daniel, Tickhill, 1987.



Heath, 1993.

Jamie, Tickhill, 1994.



The Warehouse (formerly known as BYO), 2013.

Michael, 2014.

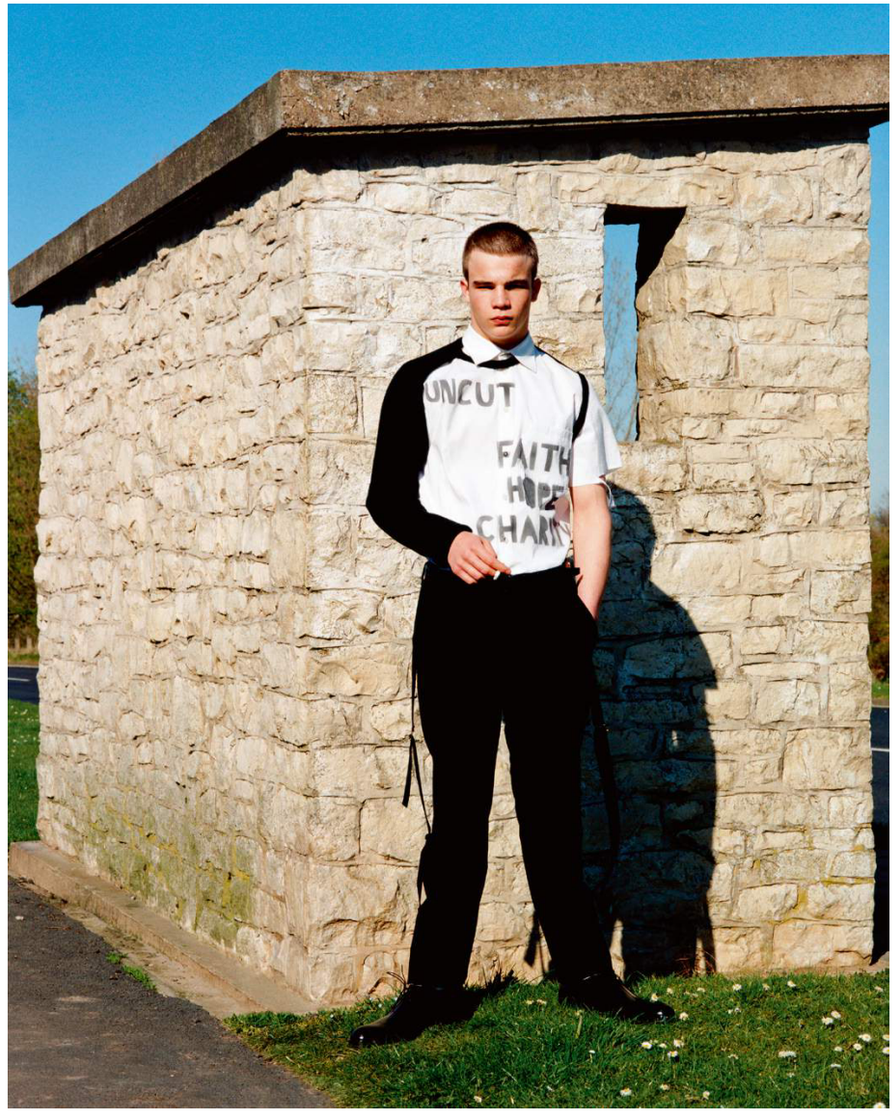
Lad, Doncaster Rovers Football Club Youth Team, 2012.

Edlington Sports Centre, Edlington, 2014.

Sam Rollinson, Thoresby Colliery, 2013.

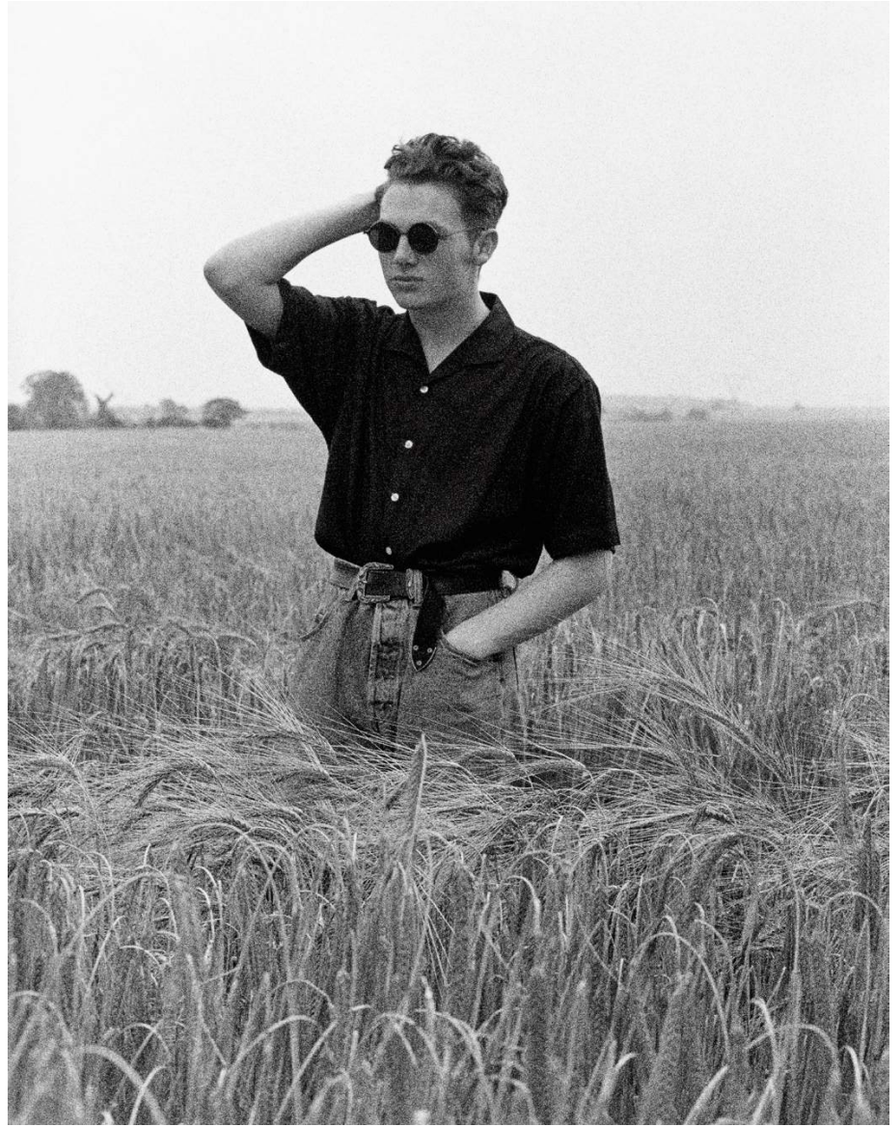
Styling: Francesca Burns. Out-take from a shoot for British *Vogue*, 2013.

Styling: David Bradshaw. Out-take from a shoot for *The Face*, 2003.



Tony, Worksop Road bus stop, Tickhill, 2003.

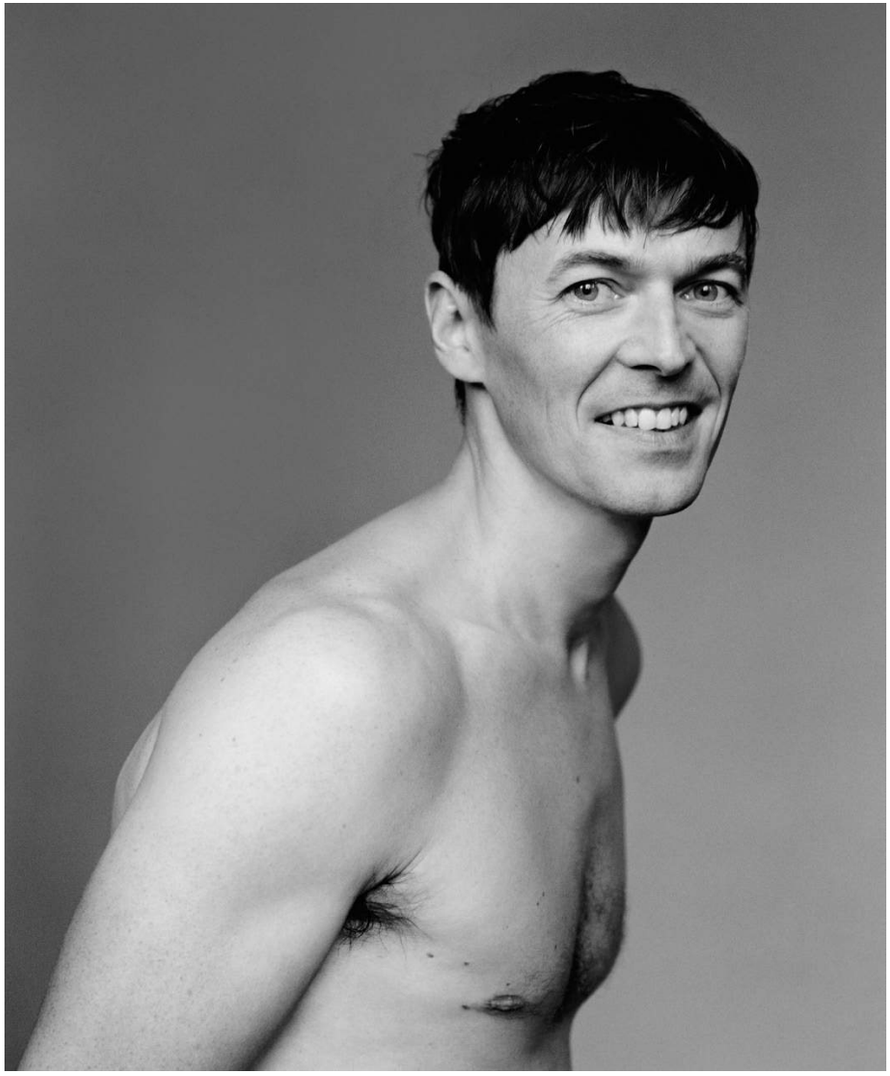
Saffron Road, Tickhill, 2012.



Des, Tickhill, 1990.

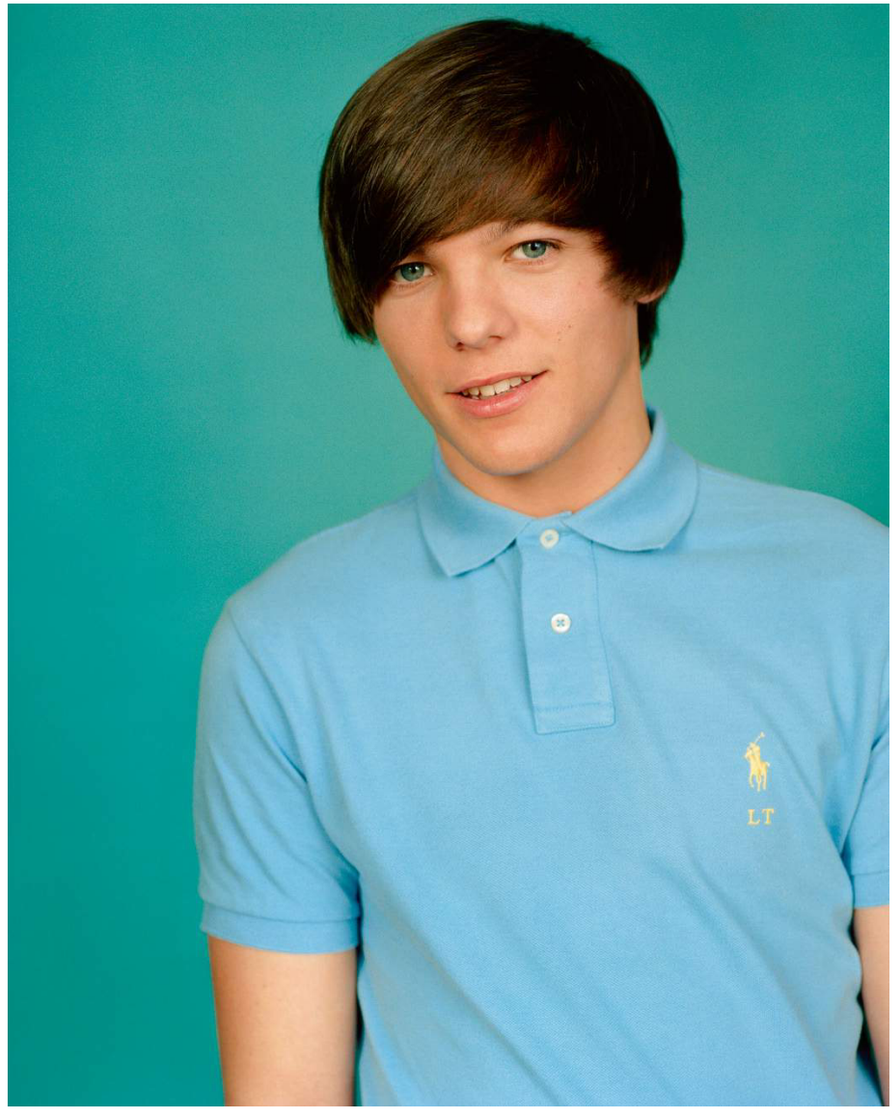
Connor, 2014.

Bus stop, Hexthorpe, 2014.



Jamie, 2014.

Photo Assistance: Lex Kembery & James Robjant. Retouching: Picturehouse.



Louis Tomlinson, 2011.

Alasdair McLellan started his life as a photographer in 1987, aged 13. In the first picture he ever took, a young boy looks out, a similar age to the photographer, wearing a green nylon parka edged in brown, synthetic fur – the kind always worn at school then. He is disappearing in tall grass; a lush green field fills the picture plane bathed in spring light. This picture was taken in Tickhill, Doncaster, Alasdair McLellan's hometown. It is a place on the borders of South Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire; rural yet industrial, close to the many pit villages that dot the area in this coal mining heartland, where many of the actual pits have now closed.

His pictures today have changed little; his way of looking at the world is almost exactly the same, particularly his way of looking at the world through a photograph. The people might have grown up, but they are still the same people, both in the picture and the one taking it. In other ways, outside the photograph, their worlds have changed irrevocably. Regardless, in Alasdair's photographs their 13-year-old selves still show in something untouched about them and there is always springtime light.

Almost ten years later in 1996, Alasdair first started taking pictures for magazines, and I had just started working on them; we have worked together ever since. His pictures then, now and in the ten years previous featured his friends from Doncaster and the environments they were all part of. This is particularly true of his best friend, Jamie Atkinson – they met at school when they were both 14 – and his new friend, the model Sam Rollinson – he first met Sam two years ago when he booked her for a shoot, intrigued by the fact that she too was from Doncaster. They are now jokingly referred to as his Doncaster muses. It should also be noted that One Direction's Louis Tomlinson is also from Doncaster and makes a guest appearance here.

Being from the North of England, Alasdair grew up on a constant diet of kitchen-sink drama through films, television and pop music, and it is these things that infuse his pictures as much as the 'real life' subject matter. Alasdair has always had romantic notions about being English and Northern and wanted to show it. Yet his photography is often in thrall to the American rites of passage film as much as to his own actual rites of passage – something as innocuous as a bench that everyone gathered around as kids in Tickhill is invested with as much meaning as the Ferrari in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. People sitting on benches often reoccur as a motif in his pictures, although more recently that person might actually be Claudia Schiffer. Yet it is perhaps the pop video, the record cover and the song lyric that holds greatest sway in his imagery. The clothes in his fashion shoots often function as a wardrobe to re-enact significant moments, visual memories or feelings from songs – or all three in some cases. Sam Rollinson standing outside a South Yorkshire colliery in a Miu Miu coatdress for *Vogue*, is an oblique nod to Viv Nicholson[1] standing on a slag heap in a short crochet creation for the cover of The Smiths' *Barbarism Begins at Home*. Alasdair does not believe in being too literal, takes a great interest in fashion and is very knowledgeable about clothes, at times taking off with a suitcase and styling his own shoots.

Alasdair McLellan has loved Bruce Weber's photography since discovering his work as a teenager. The romance, the feeling and playful sexual charge that infuses each of Weber's pictures has set an example for his own. Yet he was led to Bruce Weber's photography by the Pet Shop Boys' *Being Boring* video, directed by Weber for the song's release in 1990, and he is a great admirer of the Pet Shop Boys and their unashamed pop sensibility. Yet, very tellingly, he once declared: 'Bruce Weber art directed a country. Nobody else has done that.' It became clear Alasdair wanted to do that too, and he wanted to do that primarily through an idea of a certain type of working class English boy and girl – very different from the people Bruce Weber has mythologised. The country this time would be the North of England, the landscapes around Doncaster and South Yorkshire that he grew up in. His other great hero of 'art direction' and fellow mythologist of the North is Steven Patrick Morrissey. His unfaltering observation, both in his eye for The Smiths covers and in his ear for The Smiths lyrics, is the thing that, as a budding photographer, Alasdair most admired and took on board. And when he is dismissing something of no relevance, interest or merit today, he will often declare: 'It says nothing to me about my life.' Yet something lyrical, melancholy, mythological and unashamedly pop always does, and characterises his pictures in a way that makes it clear they are also for mass consumption.

'All we did was walk to the big park from the little park or go to the chippy. Then sit on that bench. That's all you did!'

Bradford's Buttershaw Estate[2] had a pull for the photographer at the beginning of his career taking pictures for magazines. It had been immortalised in Alan Clarke's film *Rita, Sue and Bob Too*[3], a film that he has always loved. It was released in 1987 and was written by Andrea Dunbar[4], a young woman who lived on the estate who died a few years later. Although they have their extreme differences – Alasdair's life growing up was a lot nicer, more rural and more lyrical than Andrea Dunbar's – without realising it, they have their similarities. If Morrissey, self-consciously, has Shelagh Delaney[5], Alasdair McLellan, not so self-consciously, has Andrea Dunbar. There is always a sense of a real experience, a real sense of place and a real life in his pictures, just as there is in Andrea Dunbar's writing. Although Alasdair McLellan now has frequent copyists, his approach to and reverence for a certain type of boy or girl or a way of dressing now appearing commonplace, it once wasn't. Despite this proliferation of his style, the images produced never have quite the same charge of reality, experience and truth mixed with fantasy that Alasdair McLellan's photographs do. Here, they have something to say about his life.

Jo-Ann Furniss: I never quite realised before going to Doncaster with you and seeing Tickhill, Edlington – where you went to school – Harworth and all the other places where you grew up, how dominated they are by mining. Or *were* dominated by it…

Alasdair McLellan: Tickhill is a very nice village, and it is more rural. But going to secondary school in Edlington, that was a real pit village where the Yorkshire Main Colliery was. I went to that school in 1986, and they had closed the mine in 1985, so it had a very big impact. I was meeting people at school for the first time, and nobody in their family had jobs. It was such a big contrast. But Doncaster town centre, it has always been similar, a bit of a mess. I was not really around when it wasn't; the industry had already gone.

Do you think you made a conscious effort to ignore the grimness around you? Or are the industrial strife and post-industrial landscape part of the romance in your pictures? There is this longing in them for something lost…

I think there is. Well, yes and no. It's not fun to live it, but there is the incredible aesthetic of the lost mines and in the ones that are working. A lot of my friends were from mining families and there was romance in that, the generations who had all done similar things.

What did your parents do?

My mum worked for Yorkshire Bank, and my dad worked for a company that sold number plates. Tickhill was quite wealthy because it was full of farmers who did quite well. One of my friends lived down the road in this place called Stud Farm, and there was a huge amount of agriculture in the area. There is something much more pretty, aesthetically speaking, in that. There is something quite beautiful about Conisbrough, and the light is always lovely where I am from, that always helped. Rain would clear quite quickly, so it never really felt gloomy or depressing. That had a big impact on my pictures and is still an influence; I always try and go back to that light and colour.

There is something very cinematic in your pictures, and the light and colour is quite cinematic as well; did that come from the landscape? Why were you drawn to take pictures of it all?

I just grew up around it, and I like to go back to that. I got a camera when I was 13 – even though I was really into music – but they did sort of come together because I was always looking at record sleeves. Listening to music and staring at the sleeves was a way of escaping. I worked from a very young age – I was a DJ; we had a mobile disco – and Stock, Aitken Waterman obsessed my mate from the farm, who I DJ'd with. He watched *The Hitman and Her*[6] and wanted to be Pete Waterman basically. Whereas I looked at album sleeves, very few magazines – there weren't many available where I lived – and music videos. I didn't know what it was, but I wanted to be part of that – although I didn't know quite what 'that' was!

So you wanted to do the visual accompaniment to a sound more than anything?

Basically, yes. I have always really liked music, and I particularly liked Morrissey because his lyrics were very visual and romantic and from a similar place.

And you were very inspired by The Smiths' sleeves as well…

'Carina White thought she *was* Madonna. She'd wear a leather jacket, baggy jeans, a Breton T-shirt. It was naff as fuck, but looked quite good.'

But it wasn't just those that inspired me. I really liked Herb Ritts' sleeves that he did for Madonna – my music taste has always been pretty broad, I like people if they are good. There is also something to be said for a Bros[7] sleeve; I liked their hair and their Avirex jackets. I don't particularly like their music – although I am quite fond of *I Owe You Nothing* and I don't mind *Cat Among The Pigeons*. My mate Mark Smith, who was obsessed by Stock Aitken Waterman would always make me go to The Hitman Roadshow when it was in the area – and he wasn't even gay – he then went on to work with Jive Bunny[8]. My other mate, Lloyd Roper, who DJ'd with us, liked house music. I was somewhere in between. I just used to complain that my mate was always talking over records trying to be Pete Waterman and ruining songs. So I DJ'd in pubs, in town, at working men's clubs, at weddings… I worked and listened to music all of the time and I was only about 15 or 16. I shouldn't have even been in those places. But we were quite good. We were all the same age and in the same year at school.

And this was really your entry point into being a fashion photographer…
Well, there was good stuff in the charts then, and I could look at all sorts of things and be inspired. I'd look at a Bobby Brown sleeve and think, 'I like his haircut!' I was never really consciously into fashion, but I learnt the clothes would make the difference, and I could control that aspect. I learnt that later on really, that you could do anything in fashion, make any image, as long as you put the clothes in it.

And friends would pose for you…
There was always Jamie who just is very natural in front of a camera. And I had a friend called Liz Jackson who was basically posing all the time. She had a haircut a bit like Madonna's at that point and would always want to do something. So we'd recreate these sleeves.

Was she the girl you told me about who would walk through Tickhill thinking she was Madonna carrying a stereo playing the album on a tape?
That was Carina White. She thought she *was* Madonna, and this was around 1987 when I was 13, so circa *True Blue*, the album had come out in 1986. She would walk through the village wearing a leather jacket, baggy jeans, low heels, a Breton T-shirt – looking literally like Madonna did in the video – with the music playing on a shit stereo. And then she'd throw her jacket over her shoulder – just like Madonna – and storm off out of the park. I remember thinking that's naff as fuck, but it does look quite good.

Did she sit on the bench in the village?
She did sit on the bench with her stereo. We all sat on that bench. All we did was walk to the big park from the little park and see who was around, maybe go to the millpond, or the chippy where the older kids were, then sit on that bench. Or meet at the bench. That's all you did! Or go to the other bench. Ha!

And that's why you always have benches in your pictures?
Yes, because of *the* bench. And I just think well, why wouldn't somebody be sat on a bench in Prada?

I remember seeing Claudia Schiffer sat on a bench in one of your pictures for *Vogue Paris*. And the first *L'Uomo Vogue* shoot you ever did – with Joe McKenna – which was a very big deal for you then, and you insisted on going back to Tickhill to shoot it. I think you also involved the bench in that shoot too… You always used to go on about that bloody bench!
Yes, we literally did that shoot the way we would have walked around when I was 13 – only with Joe McKenna!

When you first started shooting for magazines you were very influenced by the director Alan Clarke, weren't you?
Well, quite a few directors, but I was interested in him because I knew where it came from. It is really what turns you on visually and it all looked quite good.

There is also always a sense of narrative in your pictures, not some heavy plot, but a story is always alluded to. That's why film has always seemed like a big influence on you as well…
I always feel that you have to put yourself in the photograph a little bit – that this is so important. There has to be a story and is partly your story. I like to get inspired by memory or a certain feeling, otherwise you are just recording fashion, and that's great if you have an amazing stylist, but it is not always going to be like that. And I don't always want to just record fashion anyway, I want to do more – that is why so much is drawn from where I grew up. Or from a Bobby Brown video. Or a Pet Shop Boys video. Or from *Papa Don't Preach*. It was all part of growing up really, and there are emotions in all of it.

Do you actually see yourself as a fashion photographer?
I do, and I don't. I was only really exposed to magazines like *The Face* and *i-D* around 1989 or 1990, and it was really then I became interested in fashion. I remember Ian Brown[9] being on the cover of *The Face* and thinking how good he looked. And then seeing Corinne Day and David Sims shoots, those being great and thinking that what they were doing fitted in with how I had been thinking. That me taking pictures of my friends – who I thought looked really good – was something that you could actually do in fashion photography. That what Corrine Day and David Sims were doing made it achievable for me; that those kinds of pictures actually existed in magazines.

At the same time that you liked reality in images, you didn't reject an idea of fantasy either. Growing up in the 1980s gave you a taste for both. I think that peer group who grew up in the 1970s were much more influenced by the aesthetics attached to that decade. Whereas our peer group were very much children of the 1980s…
A lot of the films I really liked and like are from the 1980s. I like all of those American rites of passage films, those brilliant John Hughes[10] films. I have always found those films very emotional – they might be fake emotions, but I don't care, I still find them emotional! And the music tracks were usually British artists; the way music was used by John Hughes was just really good. Even though I don't like *Pretty in Pink* particularly, there is a good scene where Ducky is listening to *Please, Please, Please, Let Me Get What I Want*. And the way he used The Dream Academy version in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* as well, in the art gallery scene, it was just very emotional. I think that kind of narrative has played a big part in my photography as well. I even found *90210* emotional at times.

I think our peer group has always liked the idea of America as well…
I just thought it felt so glamorous and that the American teenage experience was so intense.

It has very defined rituals that are very appealing aesthetically. Whereas our rituals are a bit more about getting drunk in a park and a bit rubbish, theirs appear formalised and glamorous. And I suppose that's where Bruce Weber comes in too. When did you first become aware of Bruce?
It was actually Herb Ritts that I first really became aware of, mostly through the work he did with Madonna. And then probably the biggest impact that was made was Bruce Weber's *Being Boring* video for the Pet Shop Boys. I was aware of the Calvin and Ralph ads because I couldn't help but notice them – although I was not always aware of who did them – but I really thought that video was quite something. I paid attention. I was 16. It made a big impact.

And when did you decide you wanted to apply what you felt about those images to an idea of England and the kids you grew up with here?
It came naturally; it was everything I related to basically. I had already been taking pictures of my friends for years. It is my emotional connection to people and places. It is why I do most of my landscapes in South Yorkshire still; you can feel the connection in the picture. I can take a picture on a similar housing estate in London or wherever, and it just does not feel the same. There is a difference in the feeling of the picture, and I just really don't know why. Other people can tell the difference as well. That's why to do this story it was important to go home; my pictures, that aesthetic, in the end it all relates to me growing up there.

'Why wouldn't somebody be sat on a bench wearing Prada? We did that shoot with Claudia Schiffer the way we would have at 13!'

1. Viv Nicholson became known in England in 1961 when her husband won £152,319 – the equivalent to £2.9 million in 2014. As her fortune soon dwindled, she was declared bankrupt. A photograph of Nicholson appears on the cover of The Smiths' *Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now*.

2. The Buttershaw Estate is a residential area of Bradford, West Yorkshire which consists mainly of council housing.

3. *Rita, Sue and Bob Too* (1987) is a British film directed by Alan Clarke set in a Bradford council estate about two young school girls who have a sexual fling with a married man. With the strapline 'Thatcher's Britain with her knickers down', the film's depiction of working class lives and critique of social divisions earned it a reputation as a cult movie.

4. Andrea Dunbar (1961-1990) was a British playwright described as 'a genius straight from the slums'. She wrote her first play, *The Arbor*, as a school assignment at age 15.

5. Shelagh Delaney (1938-2011) was an English dramatist best known for her play, *A Taste of Honey*. In 1986, Morrissey, of The Smiths, claimed Delaney was a central motivation to his writing and chose a photograph of her for the cover of The Smiths' *Louder Than Bombs*.

6. *The Hitman and Her* was a British television dance music show that ran from 1988-1992. The programme showcased key club tunes of the day.

7. Matt and Luke Goss, and Craig Logan formed the band, Bros, in 1986. They enjoyed chart success with their singles: *Drop the Boy* and *I Owe You Nothing* before splitting in 1992.

8. Jive Bunny and The Mastermixers were a novelty pop act from Yorkshire, England. They are credited for helping to establish the 'mash up' – when two or more songs are combined to create a new composition.

9. Ian Brown is the lead singer of the The Stone Roses, whose eponymous debut album was voted the best British album of all time in 2004.

10. John Hughes (1950-2009) wrote, directed and produced some of the most successful films of the 1980s and 1990s. He is best known for his cult teen films *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, *Weird Science*, *The Breakfast Club* and *Pretty in Pink*.

The virility questionnaire: Rick Owens

By Loïc Prigent

What do people tell you when they see your muscles?
I actually don't remember anyone saying anything – maybe they're disappointed after seeing them look fresher in pictures.

What's your most virile feature?
I don't believe I have one.

What's your least virile feature?
Giggling.

Who would be the most virile woman you know?
Hun [Michèle Lamy], of course.

What is good macho?
A sense of honour.

What is bad macho?
Arrogance.

What was the last compromise that you had to make?
In dealing with the construction permits for my house over the last two years. Excruciating.

Who is your manly role model?
David Niven.

What was the toughest thing that you ever had to do?
Forgive myself for being such a dick.

What part of the body shouldn't be manscaped?
Legs.

Is there a time when a man shouldn't be wearing perfume?
When he's in your face.

What is your favourite war book?
Spandau: The Secret Diaries by Albert Speer.

What is your drag name?
Selfish Cunt.

Are you verbal during sex?
I'm not that verbal in general.

What's the sexiest thing to say after sex?
Nothing.

What is the best pick-up line you've ever been told?
'I have any drug you want at my place.'

Do you wear slippers at home?
No.

How tough are you on a scale of 1-10?
Maybe 2.

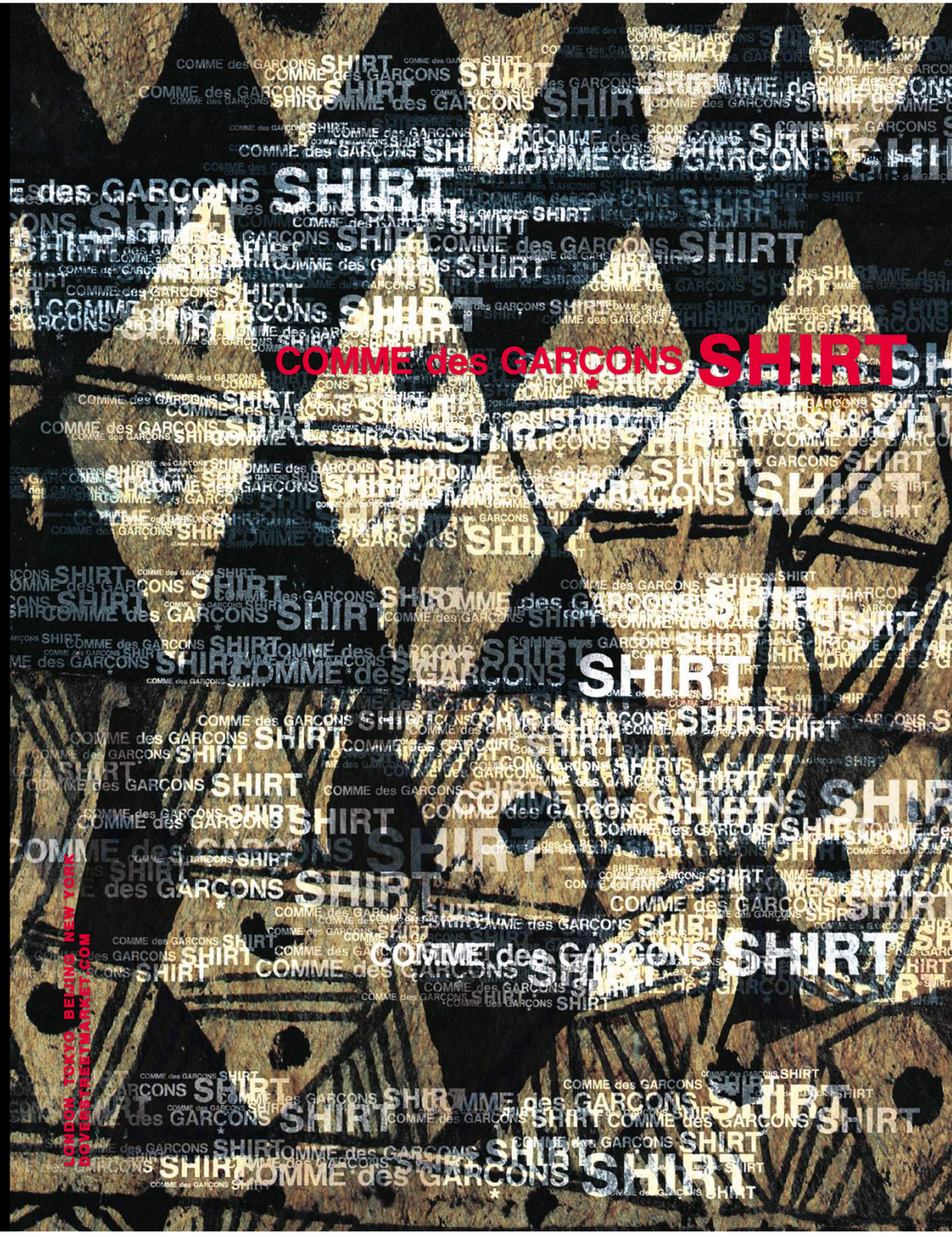
When was the last time you cried?
Long enough ago to forget about it.

What is your masterpiece?
Playing my small part in the perpetuation of cosmic love.

Do you ever cringe when you see one of your creations on someone?
Sometimes, and I hate myself for it.

Have you realised all of your fantasies?
No, but I have realised more than I ever gave myself permission to imagine.

Image courtesy of OWENSCORP



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Nodo Leather Keyrings, 2014

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